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THE PRESIDENT'S INDECISION

MR. TRUMAN'S announcement, after last Monday's conversations with Congressional leaders, indicates that the broad, constructive conceptions of the Marshall Plan are likely to be disastrously narrowed by the exigencies of American domestic politics, and that the Report of the Paris Conference—with its insecure assumptions and vague undertakings—will provide the opponents of aid programmes with ample ammunition for protracted hostilities. By postponing his decision, whether or not to summon a special meeting of Congress, until after the various Committees have reported, he has delayed even stop-gap assistance to France and Italy until, at earliest, December; while aid to Britain can hardly be expected before next summer. Congress, if recalled, will content itself with discussing whether to give 580 million dollars to France, Italy *and* Austria, although Mr. Clayton's estimate of the immediate demands of France alone, to prevent catastrophe this winter, amounted to 600 million dollars.

The President's indecision, though in part the result of personal weakness, is largely due to the growing opposition in America to the principles of the Harvard speech and a swing-back to the original Truman Doctrine of using dollars only where the "menace of Communism" is acute. The idea of putting Western Europe on its feet again by disinterested pump-priming sounded fine in theory. But as the idea began to take practical shape it became clear that it involved a gigantic American investment in planned economy. A few far-sighted men in the State Department may realise that democratic Socialism is the only alternative to Communism. But Congressmen cannot be expected to take this long-sighted view when a Presidential election is in the offing. The more the Plan is debated, the more unpalatable it appears; and the greater the inclination to sidetrack discussion of the Paris proposals and to agree on short-term, selective assistance to nations *in extremis*.

The pressures in favour of stop-gap aid—so called presumably because it just fails to stop the gaps—have been steadily increasing during the past six weeks. Senator Taft, in a widely misinterpreted speech, has given his blessing to aid being offered "to specific countries for specific purposes," but he has opposed "global loans," which can only mean loans such as the Marshall Plan envisages. Senator Vandenberg, whose intimacy with the President during his visit to Brazil seems reflected in Mr. Truman's latest moves, also favours stop-gap aid but will not commit himself on the Marshall Plan until Congress has had an opportunity for endless scrutiny and debate.

The danger that stop-gap aid will virtually replace the Marshall Plan will probably be increased by the reports of the hundred or so Congressmen who have been visiting Europe this summer. From all accounts, they will in general stress the need for American help but, if they study the two fat volumes of the Paris Report, they are bound to be struck by the lack of reality which characterises its main assumptions. Its estimates, for instance, are based on the assumptions that imports from Eastern Europe and Russia can be vastly increased, that the prices of American foodstuffs will steadily sink, and that European exports to the hard currency areas can be stepped up. It is almost impossible that all these three assumptions can simultaneously be fulfilled. Moreover, the Congressmen will almost certainly combine an opposition to planned economy with a complaint that the European countries have failed to produce plans for self-help. What they will demand of Europe is that contradiction in terms—an international plan to restore free enterprise.

But there is a legitimate basis for criticism of the Paris Report. Its promises of co-operation *are* only promises, and it fails to put forward any proposals for setting up machinery to implement them. Mr. Clayton complained in Paris that there was no central agency proposed to supervise the distribution of dollars and goods, and to ensure that they were used to the best advantage of all sixteen States. The European reply was that such an organisation would threaten national sovereignty—an objection which the Russians employed as a reason for withdrawing from the Conference. But lack of this central machinery may actually threaten the European nations with a loss of sovereignty, not to each other but to America. Since Europe is unable to create its own agency to allocate funds, America will fill the gap. Funds will be granted "to specific countries for specific purposes," i.e., piecemeal and with strings. Mr. Stassen—whose importance is that he is the only prominent Republican to have supported publicly the Marshall Plan—has already demanded a central *American* agency in Europe to allocate dollars. He is receiving growing support for this proposal and for his insistence that Socialist experiments be abandoned in return for aid.

From the Congressional viewpoint there is another powerful objection to the Marshall Plan as contrasted with stop-gap aid. The prime election issue to-day is the price of food. Both Taft and Hoover have directly blamed high prices on exports for relief. Since a return to rationing is out of the question, a broad long-term programme such as the Marshall Plan would probably raise all commodity prices still further; and woe betide the Congressman whose opponent next autumn can blame him for the high cost of living.

It appears almost certain therefore that Congress will transform the Marshall Plan into a series of temporary relief measures. These may keep Western Europe from collapsing this winter into Communism. But if the patient does not die he will certainly become less and less capable of recovering health.

Britain's Part in Germany

Next Wednesday a British Mission headed by Sir William Strang is due to begin discussions in Washington with regard to the future financing and administration of the joint Anglo-American Zone of Germany. The assumption from which these discussions are bound to start is that Britain—excluded, as she is, from any chance of receiving stop-gap aid from the United States during the next nine months—cannot

provide further dollars to bridge Bizonia's import-export gap. This being so, there appears to be an increasing tendency in the United States to argue that, if the U.S. Treasury must pay the piper's whole bill, then the U.S. State Department must have sole right to call the political tune. Already, in the agreement concluded for the interim management of the Ruhr coalfield, this country has made large concessions to American demands. The Labour Government cannot afford to continue this process indefinitely. If it were to subscribe submissively to a political and economic *Aufbau* in Western Germany on lines acceptable exclusively to American bankers, it would forfeit what little it retains of prestige and influence in Europe; and, worst of all, divorce between France and Britain in relation to the problems of European reconstruction would be complete. Fortunately, though Sir William will be holding in Washington a hand which lacks financial aces, there is a joker in the pack. Military personnel and skilled administrators provided by Britain are just as essential to Bizonia as American dollars. Rather than abandon its declared intentions to lay the basis for genuine Social Democracy in the British sector of Germany, the Government would do better to announce its intention to withdraw. Confronted with such a move, the U.S. Administration would be compelled to modify radically its demands for a "free hand" in Germany.

Communist Counter-offensive in China

Indications point to the opening of a new phase in China's civil war: a counter-offensive begun in August by the Communist-led forces of the Liberated Areas has penetrated to the Central Yangtze region, and fighting is now going on within 50 miles of Nanking. In his fourteen months' campaign against the Communists Chiang Kai-shek has suffered heavy losses of men—in the Yenan and Kiangsu-Anhwei Border Regions in Shantung and in the Honan-Shansi area. Lacking a pool of reinforcement troops in the Southern Provinces, he had concentrated 400,000 men in Shantung for an advance against the port of Chefoo; his garrisons in Peiping, Kalgan and Manchuria were isolated; and his divisions on the Northern fronts had become increasingly pinned down by guerilla activities. Exploiting this vulnerable situation of the Kuomintang forces, the Communists appear to have struck, with considerable effect, at Chiang's rear. One Field Army, under General Liu Po-chen, crossing the Lunghai railway, has occupied the large Tapieh *massif* in south-east Honan and reached West Anhwei. (Advanced elements of this army are reported to have crossed the Yangtze.) A second Army, moving on roughly parallel lines, has entered West Honan; yet another has forced the Grand Canal in the rear of the Kuomintang forces in Shantung; and a fourth Army, operating against Yenchuan and Yungpi, has cut off large Kuomintang forces in the North. The immediate aim of the counter-offensive is presumably to compel Chiang Kai-shek to evacuate all the provinces north of the Yangtze. It is an ambitious design, which the U.S. War Department is probably viewing with some concern, and its achievement militarily is likely to involve heavy fighting over several months. Politically the Communists are no doubt relying on the effect of their initiating land reform on a large scale in the rear of the Kuomintang forces.

Palestine Perplexities

Contrary to the prevailing opinion in this country, Mr. Creech Jones's statement to the U.N. Assembly settles nothing. The one point on which he was unambiguous—that British troops would be withdrawn—was weakened by his failure to state a time-table. The questions to which the Assembly expected an answer from the British delegate were how evacuation can be accomplished with least bloodshed, in what way power will be transferred to the Jews and Arabs, and at what date the British evacuation will take place. On all these points Mr. Creech Jones was studiously vague, and it is not surprising that his speech has been interpreted by a sceptical world opinion as yet another stalling device. Yet it marked an advance in British policy. After two successive Commissions have reported against him, Mr. Bevin has apparently given up hope of obtaining international support for the enforcement of the White Paper as a permanent solution of the Palestine problem. So far so good. But though he accepts defeat on this issue after two costly years, he is not prepared to enforce any other policy, such as partition. That, he says, must be done by the United Nations if they think it just and practicable. This manœuvre will probably succeed in killing the majority report of Unscop, since it is most unlikely that any other nation, least of all America, will be prepared to send troops to Palestine. But how will this diplomatic victory help us? We are still left with the appalling problem of what to do in the interim period while the Mandate is wound up. Is it Mr. Bevin's intention to continue to maintain the blockade until the last British soldier is embarked? If so, the concluding months of the Mandate may well be the bloodiest in its history. What is the object of wasting British money and lives in preventing Jewish immigration for a few more months if, on the day after we leave, the Haganah will be free to bring in all the reinforcements it likes and to carve out the boundaries of a Jewish State by armed force? If we seriously contemplate immediate evacuation, the only sane policy is to disengage our armed forces immediately and concentrate them in the Negeb. Simultaneously we should hand over control of their respective areas to Jews and Arabs. Viewed dispassionately, the imposition of partition during our last months in Palestine might well be less costly than an attempt to maintain the *status quo* until the last moment.

Incentives and Inflation

The visit paid to the Prime Minister on Wednesday by a delegation from the General Council of the Trades Union Congress was prompted, in the first instance, by the desire to obtain further elucidation of the meaning of the letter which Mr. Isaacs recently addressed to all joint industrial councils calling their attention to the appeal, which Mr. Attlee made on August 6, that workers should refrain from making claims for increased wages. Written at a time when demands for a substantial increase in wages by miners, building operatives, furniture makers and Post Office workers are either under negotiation or pending, the circular from the Minister of Labour appears to have been interpreted by the T.U.C. as an attempt to apply a general "wage-stop" throughout industry; and this negative form of wages policy is likely to arouse as much opposition from organised labour as was aroused by talk of a constructive wages policy aimed at creating incentives to enter unpopular but essential industries. Linked, however, with the question whether wages should be temporarily frozen is the much wider issue of the steps which should be taken to prevent the inflationary pressure of excessive purchasing power—impinging on a domestic market which the Cripps Plan will starve of consumers' goods—distorting our whole national economy out of the pattern to which, in the present balance of payments crisis, it is imperative that it should conform. Expectations are that Mr. Dalton will introduce an Autumn Budget; and that, as a means of discouraging demand for unessential articles of consumption, he will announce steep increases in the incidence of Purchase Tax. A much more controversial issue is raised by rumours that he will balance new taxes on distributed profits—and possibly heavier surtax on the higher ranges of investment income—by a substantial reduction in the Treasury subsidies, now costing approximately £400 millions a year, provided for the purpose of pegging the retail price of essential foodstuffs.

Equality of Sacrifice

The case put forward by those who favour a reduction in the food subsidies is that current expenditure on alcohol, tobacco and betting indicates that the mass of the population are in enjoyment of spendable incomes which are by no means fully absorbed by expenditure on essentials such as rent and rationed foods. If, therefore, more of this "loose" money were mopped up by deliberately allowing essential living costs to rise, the pressure of demand for labour required to satisfy marginal requirements such as betting pools, entertainments and a wide range of trades from drinks to cosmetics, would be relieved. It is also argued, with less cogency, that if British domestic food prices are held, as they now are, at a level much below that of world prices, the negotiation of contracts for food imports becomes administratively difficult. Mr. Dalton hinted, when he introduced his last Budget, that he would keep the matter of food subsidies under review; but to rely on their reduction as the main corrective of inflationary tendencies would, in our view, be impolitic and inequitable. Apart from the consideration that "rationing by the purse" is the last method which a Socialist Government should adopt for dealing with a shortage of goods, the increase in living costs which would follow from any substantial reduction of the subsidies would not even be spread fairly over wage-earning consumers: in a number of industries wage rates are linked automatically to the cost of living index, and workers in those industries would not feel the pinch at all. In the case of other industries, increased costs of rationed food—coming on top of current substantial increases in the cost of coal, rail travel and many unrationed foodstuffs such as fish, fruit and vegetables—would be the signal for immediate demands for more wages; the inflationary spiral would probably be accelerated rather than retarded. On persons with small fixed incomes the new burden would fall harshly; there would almost certainly have to be a new Act linking Old Age Pension rates to the cost of living index. Above all, Mr. Dalton would have great difficulty in satisfying organised labour, on whose willing co-operation Britain's ability to weather the crisis depends, that the balancing of food subsidy cuts with steeper taxes on profits represented real equality of sacrifice. For, unless profit taxes were raised to a point at which they became really a new Income Tax (the distribution of which would be so haphazard as to be manifestly illogical and unfair), the revenue from this source would be inconsiderable.

Where the Money Is

If it formed part of a comprehensive plan of disinflation by fiscal means, a decision to ask the working class to accept a rise of, say, ten per cent. in the cost of basic foodstuffs would be defensible. But, as Mr. Donald Bruce, M.P. points out on a later page, the really inflationary pressure on short supplies of goods and labour arises, not so much from swollen incomes, as from accumulation of profits and enhanced capital values which can be diverted into consumption demand. The case which he makes for a capital levy is, in our opinion, irresistible; and in the absence of such a levy the Labour Movement should set its face against a policy of deflation through higher living costs and lower real wages. By itself, however, a capital levy might well fail to apply a sufficiently quick corrective to inflation. The current figure of banking deposits suggests that immense sums, in the accumulation of which transactions which escape the Inland Revenue's attention have probably played no small part, are held in "liquid" form. We should like to see Mr. Dalton taking his courage in both hands and—as was done by M. Gutt in Belgium with remarkably successful results—calling in the currency and blocking all bank balances above a modest figure. Their gradual release should be proportioned to national recovery.

THE TWO INDIAS

No one would wish to minimise the horrors of the continuing tragedy in the Punjab. The ceaseless columns of refugees moving hopelessly each way across the border are now variously estimated in number at between two and five millions. Conditions in the refugee camps, aggravated by heavy rains and cessation of normal food supplies, are inevitably even more miserable than their poverty-stricken inmates are accustomed to in their own homes. No refugee convoy or train is safe from murderous attacks, sometimes carried out with the connivance of those entrusted with its safe guidance. The death roll has risen until it is now in the neighbourhood of 100,000. Cultivation is being neglected: in some parts crops are being prematurely gathered while in others they may not be cut at all, with the consequence that the margin for India between starvation and subsistence becomes smaller and she is thereby the more dependent on imports for her food.

On humane and economic grounds, the outlook is black. Politically also the situation grows daily more dangerous. Recriminations and wild statements hinting at war are on the increase. Both sides are convinced that the other is not doing its best to quell the disturbances. Pakistan believes that India is deliberately trying to engineer her destruction. India fears that Pakistan is aiming to draw Britain, together with the Commonwealth, once again into the internal affairs of India and so whittle away her newly won independence at the outset. To top it all, Mr. Churchill, in a speech as violent and as incautious as any made by any Indian leader, informs the world that we are only at the beginning of the horrors and the butcheries which Indians have "perpetrated upon one another with the ferocity of cannibals" and that the British Government should have applied the methods of Palestine to maintain control of India and to ensure an orderly transition of power. By this Mr. Churchill presumably means that the British left too soon, without doing what they could to ensure good administration after their departure, and that the two new Dominion Governments are unfit to rule. That, at any rate, is the interpretation put on his words by Indians who are hardly likely to be encouraged to remain in the Commonwealth by this attitude of contempt and hostility on the part of a great British statesman.

In a situation so confused and uncertain it is important to maintain a clear view of the certainties. First on the list is that, apart from all moral considerations, Britain had to leave India and could not have left it later than last August. After the war, the British administration was so depleted and so run down that the British Government had only two alternatives open to it. She could have reinforced the Civil Service, the Police and doubled the size of the pre-war British Forces in India. That would have ensured effective control. At the same time, it would have been impossible to continue progress towards self-government. No popular Ministries could have been allowed in the Provinces or at the Centre. Such governments would of necessity have had a vastly different approach to that of the British administration and could therefore not have been tolerated. In the absence of popular governments there would have been country-wide risings obliging the authorities to reincarcerate all the Indian leaders and many others, or be swept away. In every sense of the word India would have been a Fascist country—the Fascists being supplied by us. In addition, the period of Fascist rule could not at the minimum have been fixed at less than twenty years. A long period would have been essential in order to obtain recruits for the administrative machine and thoroughly to re-establish the prestige of the British Raj on the basis of force. So for twenty years Britain would have maintained, with diminishing chances of keeping order, far larger forces than in Palestine in face of the odium of the world and rising popular opposition throughout India; for what?

Her other course was to go, and to go before the administration collapsed, as it surely would have done by now. On that point all those with wide experience of India, including Lord Linlithgow, would agree. But when you hand over the control of a country to its inhabitants you cannot, as Mr. Churchill seems to think, dictate the form in which you will hand it over. The form is determined by the views of the recipients of power. If the entire government had been given to Congress the disturbances created by the Moslems would have made the present carnage in the Punjab look like a scuffle at the tail end of a meeting of the British League of Ex-Servicemen. Hence the division of India, with the consent of the people, offered the best prospect of ensuring peace. Nor was it possible to force more co-operation on the two States than they were willing to give to each other.

The second certainty is that, having by artificial means maintained "law and order" in India for over a hundred years, the British could not hope to leave without some disturbances following her departure. At whatever date the British went—1947, 1967, or 2007—the communal problems, held in check by British power, were bound to arise, and the later the date the worse the problems. By handing over power the British have at least avoided their own participation in them. By the establishment of Pakistan the problems were lessened. Only the possibility of providing an effective solution for the Sikhs has caused the trouble.

The third certainty is, as already pointed out in this journal, that the disturbances in proportion to the rest of the sub-continent, affect only a fraction of its area and population. So far riots have spread no further than the refugees have travelled. Now there is every reason to hope that the great land mass of India will remain untouched by them. Their initial violence, against which no government could have done more than has been done by Pakistan and India and particularly by the newly created Provincial Governments of East and West Punjab, is dying down.

The chief remaining danger is that, as a result of what has already happened and of what may still occur in the weeks before order is finally restored, relations between Pakistan and India may become permanently estranged. On both sides there are those ready to talk of war and the bitterness engendered is not likely to disappear for years. At a moment when the greatest restraint was needed on the top level, it was disturbing in the extreme that Mr. Gandhi, although carefully reiterating his own adherence to non-violence, should have said "if there is no other way of securing justice from Pakistan, and if Pakistan persistently refuses to see its proved error and continues to minimise it, the Indian Union Government would have to go to war against it." No doubt Mr. Gandhi intended this as a warning of the hideous possibilities in store if recriminations were not dropped and if the authorities did not exert themselves even further in the task of regaining control. It was spilled out of him by his disgust at the slaughter around him. Unfortunately, unscrupulous publicists in India and Pakistan have seized on the remark as a justification for their war-mongering activities. It is to be hoped that his immediate disavowal of any desire for war will damp this campaign before it gets in its stride.

More alarming, by virtue of its being the act of a government, is the appeal of Pakistan for help from the Dominions. Being a new government, and with a far smaller territory than India, the shock of the disturbances falls more heavily on her than it does on India. It is understandable that she should be desperate for the means of ending the trouble so that she can begin the task of building up her economy and administration. Every day that passes in rioting represents to her an insupportable loss of revenue and of food. But the appeal is ill-considered for two reasons. First, because, short of despatching troops, there is nothing that this country or any other can do to stop the troubles. Secondly, because, if the appeal were answered, and support given to Pakistan, India, who has not associated herself with the appeal, would resent it to the extent of breaking away from the Commonwealth altogether. Nothing can be gained by dragging other Powers into the arena. The only way out is constructive co-operation between the two Dominions, which will not be forthcoming so long as the tendency of the leaders to distrust each other flourishes. The best answer that can be given by the older Dominions is to urge this co-operation and to eschew direct intervention. Talk of civil war need not yet be taken seriously, but much has to be done to promote the good relations vital to both Dominions if they are to exist together in the same sub-continent.

In the meanwhile, any practical aid like medical, food and other supplies that the Dominions could send would be invaluable. It would be a token of friendship that would bear great dividends in the future. Every effort should be made by this country to see that any food we may have contracted to buy in the U.S.A., but cannot through dollar shortage, goes to India. Concentration on the concrete economic and administrative needs of the moment is the surest cure for the jagged emotions now being roused on both sides of the Punjab border.

THE CASE FOR A CAPITAL LEVY

The cuts effected by the Government in imports from the dollar area, when taken in conjunction with the withdrawal of goods from the home market for export, clearly involve a further intensification of existing inflationary pressure. It may thus be argued, with force, that an increase in individual effort, *which does not at the same time create wages or profits increases available for consumer spending*, is required. The difficulty is that part of the incentive for increased production lies in the real value, in terms of consumer goods, of the spendable money incomes created in the process. The Government's dilemma is thus plain. Were more consumer goods available for consumption in the home market, decreases in taxation on earned incomes would provide a monetary incentive without endangering stability of prices. But the diminishing volume of such goods makes a reduction of taxation impossible, and increases in wages or distributed profits undesirable. Both the negative "Work or Want" threat characteristic of the Board of Trade and the more positive persuasiveness of the Lord President of the Council are put forward on the assumption that there is no other escape from the dilemma. The Government, it would seem, has misunderstood both the basic nature of the inflation problem and the correct use of budgetary correctives.

Since 1938, wholesale prices have increased by 87 per cent. and wages have gone up by 65 per cent. Quite clearly, therefore, it is to be expected that, taking distributed profits also into account, personal expenditure on consumer goods and services at current prices should have undergone a considerable rise. In fact, from a figure of £4,252 millions in 1938 the amount has increased (Table 137, *Statistical Digest*, July 1947) to £7,697 millions in the twelve months ended March 1947—an increase of a little over 80 per cent. At the same time a great redistribution of income appears to have taken place. After taxation, according to the White Paper *National Income and Expenditure* 1938–1946, the number of people in receipt of net incomes between £150 and £250 has increased from 4,500,000 in 1938–39 to 7,950,000 in 1945–46; those in the £250–£500 group from 1,820,000 to 5,225,000, and

those in the £500–£1,000 group from 450,000 to 452,000. But people in the £4,000–£6,000 group have declined in numbers from 12,000 to 840, and the £6,000 and over group has dwindled from 7,000 to a mere 45.

Mr. Morrison's conclusion is that "the era for soaking the rich is past." On his assumption, increased taxation to reduce inflation would have to be spread evenly on top of the existing grading of burdens. What appears to have escaped Mr. Morrison's notice is that the incomes stated in the White Paper are the net residue of *taxable* incomes only, whereas spendable incomes, reflected in a tremendously increased volume of currency and credit, have been made outside the scope altogether of the taxing statutes. Much of this increase, illustrated by a rise since 1938 of nearly £3,000 million in bank deposits, represents resources accumulated for re-equipment and repair of machinery and plant, within the facilities granted in the assessment of Excess Profits Tax; and a large proportion of it must consist of voluntary savings and reserves which have already attracted taxation. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that swollen deposits, accompanied by a great increase in currency circulating, are in large measure a reflection of huge profits wholly outside the scope of the taxing statutes.

In theory, the 100 per cent Excess Profits Tax in force during the war "mopped up" a considerable proportion of this potential spending power. In fact, it did not. As the law stood, and still stands, the profits accruing from "casual" transactions are not liable to taxation. As a general rule, therefore, if a business is bought and resold, and the operation is not in the normal scope of the trade or occupation of the person carrying it out, the profit arising is not taxable. And since one or two operations of this kind yield a return equivalent to many years' normal trading income subject to Income Tax and E.P.T., it was, and is, hardly necessary to conduct them with a frequency likely to attract taxation liability. Persons with private businesses, either in sole proprietorship or as partnerships, have been able to sell these businesses to limited companies for shares and cash at a price reflecting not only the book values of any fixed or floating assets passing on the sale, but a substantial capital appreciation. The profit made on the sale is not liable to taxation.

Again, shares in companies have been sold to holding companies in exchange for shares in the new companies and for cash. The profit, arising in the main from a scarcity of the assets represented by the shares sold, is passed on to the original shareholders free of tax. Similar considerations apply to the profits realised on the appreciation of capital assets on the winding up of limited companies. Thus, capital profits arising from a shortage of commodities consequent on a struggle in which all shared are passed on, tax tree, to a limited section of the population—the large owners of property, whether individuals or companies. They add powerfully to a general inflationary pressure which is felt by all

The working population of the country, who may have been lulled by E.P.T. into believing that equality of sacrifice obtained during the War, are under no such illusions now. For practical knowledge of the ostentatious expenditure of the large owners of property makes nonsense of the observations of the Lord President. There is no equality of sacrifice. Moreover, it is not only the workers who feel it; the ordinary *entrepreneur* desirous of carrying on normal and necessary trading and productive enterprise feels that, while he is being "played for a sucker," the Big Shot spivs of commerce and finance grow rich. Moreover, the almost uninterrupted rise in the Stock Exchange value of securities between VE-day and the Spring of 1947 yielded capital gains which individual investors have been treating as spendable (and untaxed) income.

Reversion, however, to the dear money policy suggested by the Opposition would result in greatly increasing the burden of the National Debt and the cost of local authorities' borrowings. It would also produce deflation at the expense of full employment. Accompanied by a *general* restriction of credit it would seriously incommode, among others, the genuine *entrepreneur*, whose services the nation requires. Hence one school of dis-inflationists urge that the best way of reducing inflationary pressure is to abolish or reduce food subsidies and to allow the "price mechanism" to operate fully again, while freezing wages (but not, of course, profits) at their existing level. Were the Chancellor to be beguiled into this trap, and he has given some hints that food subsidies may have to be "re-examined," it would be the 1931 economy cuts all over again, in terms not of slashing wages or social services, but of reducing the value of what money will buy.

The solution lies in exactly the opposite direction. What is needed is, first, a straight capital levy; and, secondly, a Capital Profits Tax, combined with more rigorous application of the provisions of the Borrowing (Control and Guarantees) Act 1946 and capital development controls.

The necessity for a capital levy, for a long time one of the cardinal points in Labour's policy, is now more widely acknowledged. Professor J. R. Hicks, writing in *Lloyds Bank Review* for July, 1947, says:

> There is a strong case for a capital levy, stronger perhaps than could have been foreseen seven years ago. For a capital levy would be a more useful measure against suppressed inflation, of the kind we are now experiencing, than it was against the overt inflation experienced by Continental countries in the 1920's.

The issue is simply what form the capital levy should take. Those who favour the principle of a compulsory loan to the Government are anxious that long-term control should rest with those subject to the levy. There is, however, a more powerful case for a straight levy for the express purpose of building up a Budget surplus to check immediate inflationary pressure and permit, as opportunity serves, taxation reliefs for productive wage and salary earners. The continuing Capital Profits Tax is needed to correct the incidence of taxation, and make equality of sacrifice a reality. DONALD BRUCE

THE CYMBALIST CASE

THE grave defects in our court-martial system evoke public indignation from time to time, and there is hope that the final recommendations of the "Lewis Committee"—when they are made—will not only be progressive but will be forced into operation by public opinion in spite of opposition from the War Office and the Air Ministry.

At the same time, we cannot endure patiently, above all if we are the direct victims of it, the defective working of the existing system. Perhaps one of its worst features is the difficulty of correcting a conviction once a Court Martial has arrived at it. Civil courts, staffed by trained judges, with the assistance of trained advocates, often arrive at wrong decisions, too; but for them there is a range of appellate courts, similarly equipped, to affirm or reverse their decisions. A Court Martial, on the other hand, consists of laymen, and the accused is only too often represented by an unqualified defence officer; yet, when their conviction is once made, no argument can ever be addressed to anybody on behalf of the convicted man except in the form of a written petition; and one hardly needs to be a lawyer to realise the immense disadvantage of putting arguments in writing only, to someone you never see, without the least idea as to what point in the case impresses him, or any chance to clear up any misapprehension in his mind.

The only safeguard that is supplied by the existing system—apart from petitions—is that the proceedings have to be reviewed by a series of officers, mostly with some legal qualifications. This means that, with whatever zeal or care or bias they may possess, they read over the official written record of the trial, called the Proceedings, form a view as to whether the conviction should stand, and report accordingly. The convicted man and his advisers, if he has any, never see the reviewers, nor indeed know exactly who they are; and no one knows whether they take five minutes or five days; but lawyers who know the tedium of reading endless documents and the difficulties of continuous solitary concentration often suspect that the work—especially in times or pressure—must occasionally be done perfunctorily. And in any case, of course, one absolute condition of the effectiveness of such review is the accuracy and completeness of the written record. These records are often the long-hand notes of the Deputy Judge Advocate, taken in narrative form, with some of the more important questions and answers given verbatim; but in some cases they are actual transcripts of shorthand notes.

In the well-known case of Aircraftman Cymbalist, who was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude, afterwards mitigated to five, for endeavouring to persuade somebody to take part in a mutiny, a good deal of light has been thrown both on the accuracy of the "Proceedings" as a record and on the degree of care taken in reviewing them.

It is not my purpose to discuss here the merits of this conviction—one of comparatively few that have remained so far unquashed out of all the convictions connected with so-called mutinies in the Army and Air Force in the Middle and Far East in 1946—except that I would not like to be thought for a moment to suggest that it had any more right to stand unquashed than all the many that have been quashed. All I seek to do is to relate the defects of the "Proceedings" and the incidents of the review.

First, the Proceedings. It appears that a shorthand writer was employed to take notes of the evidence of Cymbalist himself. His evidence "in chief" is nevertheless given almost entirely in narrative form, and not verbatim; this is not important, perhaps, but it is odd. But when we come to the record of his cross-examination the position is scandalous. Cross-examination is of crucial importance; it should break the defence of a guilty man, and an intelligent, innocent man may by his survival unshaken in cross-examination establish his innocence for good and all. Plainly, no one can properly review a case if he does not know what happened on the cross-examination of the accused (or any other important witness).

And what do the Proceedings show? They show that Cymbalist was asked sixty-one questions, and made sixty-one answers. The answers are in the Proceedings, but not one syllable of the questions is recorded. The record is really a string of nonsense at this stage: it contains such illuminating phrases as "I do not agree with that question," "Yes, this is correct," "They are lying if they said that," "I deny that," without the faintest clue as to what question he was answering. I defy any lawyer to form a view as to the effect of this vital part of Cymbalist's evidence. Cynical questions about how this evidence came to be lost are in the circumstances inevitable. (No explanation has ever been given, although one was asked for in a question in the House; no regret has ever been expressed, although that, too, was asked for; and there is no suggestion that the missing questions have been supplied from any other source.)

Then we come to the review. The case, on this defective record, was reviewed by two authorities in the Far East and by two in England. The defect was apparently not even noticed—it was certainly not mentioned—by either of the first two. It was observed by the third, the Judge Advocate-General in England, but he did not even draw the attention of the fourth and final authority, the Air Council, to it. All the reviews went through, confirming the conviction, without any public mention of the defect, and it would never have been heard of at all if Cymbalist's friends had not been able and willing to pay the Government to supply them with a copy of the Proceedings, when the defect became public

By that time, of course, the conviction had been confirmed several times, but it proved possible to force the Air Council to undertake a new review, and to take the opinion of the Law Officers on the position. After thinking it over for three months the Law Officers said that there was a partial defect in the record, but that the Proceedings formed an adequate record for the purposes of confirmation and review, and that Cymbalist had not been prejudiced! I would be amused to hear them defend in open court the proposition that a man has not been prejudiced by the omission of sixty-one questions and the unintelligibility of most of sixty-one answers when one hasn't the remotest idea what the omitted material was; but I am sure they would be happier arguing the opposite.

D. N. PRITT

RUGGED PAUPERISM

"This is not an appeal for charity but a legitimate request for assistance."—Mr. Bevin, Paris, September 22nd.

It was Christmas Day in the Workhouse
Where sixteen paupers sat,
There was holly in the windows
And Welcome on the mat,
There was broth and Christmas pudding
And canned Chicago pork,
And the wealthy workhouse guardians
Flew over from New York.

Oh, the paupers were meek and grateful,
With "Thank'ee kindly, mums"
As they munched the roast and crackling
Between their shrivelled gums,
And the guardians kindly smiling
Surveyed their Christmas treat,
But one of the old men muttered
And jumped up from his seat.

He looked at the guardians' ladies,
He looked at the gorged fifteen,
And the company saw with horror
He was going to make a scene.
He shouted as if at a meeting—
Was he humble? Not in the least—
"I don't give a cuss for the guardians,
Or their b—— vulture's feast.

"You can take your Christmas pudding. . ."
The guardians shrank away,
For they knew as if by instinct,
What the pauper was going to say,
But he mastered his strong emotion
And he spoke on a calmer note—
"You may throw us your Christmas dinner,
But it sticks in this pauper's throat.

"Do you think I will take your bounty?
Well—I won't say but I might,
But you call it a generous action,
And I say it's only our right.
You think we are penniless paupers,
But as for the likes of me,
I asked for the bread of Resistance,
Not the pudding of charity.

"I hereby table the motion
This feed is the pauper's due."
Would one pauper refuse their pudding?
The guardians hadn't a clue.
But the workhouse went on with the banquet
And the guardians made for the door,
And the pauper got down to his pudding
And passed his plate for more.

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A LONDON DIARY

After all, it looks as though the Cabinet changes are going to involve a great deal more than a reshuffle. That much is clear from the first announcement last Tuesday. By deciding to share with Stafford Cripps supreme authority over all economic policy, Mr. Attlee has completely transformed the situation inside the Cabinet. Ever since the fuel crisis, the real defect has been not so much a lack of clear policy, as a failure of administrative drive in getting any directive carried out by the various Departments concerned. Time after time, the Premier has been pressed by his critics, inside and outside Parliament, to appoint a Minister of Economics or Production. Up till now he has always refused on the ground that this would violate the principle of Departmental responsibility which, he maintained, was essential to Cabinet government. He seemed determined to play the role of chairman smoothing out differences between equals instead of imposing a policy on subordinates. Now apparently he has swung over to the opposite view, and Cripps will enjoy an authority over the five production Ministries—Labour, Supply, Board of Trade, Fuel and Power, and Works—equal to that of the Minister of Defence in relation to the Service Ministries. It is a welcome change, and it is a tribute to Cripps's astonishing rise in prestige that he has been selected for the job. Last July, when a similar change was widely discussed, it was tacitly assumed that no one but Ernest Bevin could fill the bill. Cripps was ruled out as someone the T.U.C. could not stomach. Now it is freely admitted, even in Trade Union circles, that, if anyone can see us through, he can.

* * *

The decision must have involved a bold act of personal leadership by the Prime Minister. It cannot have been easy to persuade Herbert Morrison to give up his impossibly heavy dual role of leader of the House and economic co-ordinator. But I am sure that this was a wise change. No one can control the Labour backbenchers better than Herbert if he gives his whole mind to it, and he will now have Arthur Greenwood's old job of co-ordinating social services in order to keep his administrative hand in practice. As for Arthur Greenwood, though his retirement was not unexpected, the Prime Minister must have found it difficult to say good-bye to a shrewd, loyal and universally popular colleague who deserves all credit for refusing promotion upward to another place. He has the consolation of knowing that his retirement has made it possible to give Cabinet rank to Harold Wilson, one of the brightest of the many younger men for whom he has always shown such a genuine interest and affection. Will this new concentration of power cure the lack of corporate decision which has been the chief weakness of the Cabinet? That depends very largely on the further changes which have not been announced as I write. At present it looks as though Cripps and Ernest Bevin will now dominate the Cabinet, the one supreme on economic policy, the other on foreign policy and defence. This of course leaves the central issue—which one can roughly describe as guns *versus* margarine—unresolved. If there is to be a cut in the Armed Forces sufficient to make the Cripps Plan work, then there will have to be changes in the Ministry of Defence and the Service Ministries; and a great deal will depend on Mr. Attlee's choice of men for these jobs.

* * *

Those who make silly jokes about Sir (Austerity) Cripps, etc., should recall that he earned the soubriquet on the first occasion when he was selected as the man to restore public confidence. That occasion was of course the singularly bleak period of 1941 after the sinking of the Prince of Wales—the only period of the war, I believe, when Mr. Churchill was really despondent. Stafford was the one man able to put over a "moral" broadcast appeal that sounded clear-headed and business-like. Stafford has the same effect on people to-day. A month ago we had the feeling of sitting like helpless passengers in an aeroplane which has run into a storm and is likely to go into a tail spin. Now the machine feels in control again. Instead of tightening our safety belts for a crash, we feel safe enough to return to our old arguments about the pilot's course. There will be plenty of room for argument in the coming months.

* * *

People believe in a crisis when it bites them—when the value of their money drops astronomically, when the bread ration is cut, when there is no fuel or the queues lengthen at the Labour Exchanges. We talk about a crisis, but we do not really believe it during a gorgeous and protracted summer, when everyone has work and money to spend in shops that are comparatively well supplied. The storm is still to come in this country. When it does it will only be a little eddy from the whirlwind which is sweeping over the world. At a guess we shall see ration cuts, some unemployment due to lack of raw materials, and shortages in the shops before Christmas, but our next real crisis will not be upon us until the spring. The Government's greatest difficulty is to refuse to carry through immediately purely nationalist expedients which may help things here for a short time, but which will merely make the general situation worse. As in 1931, all nations tried to save themselves by violently protecting their home markets—a policy that led to the crash, to Hitler, and to war. Similarly to-day we are in danger of all trying to get into our National Socialist kennels and trying to save ourselves by barking at other people to keep out.

* * *

The future historian of this strange epoch will surely notice as one of its peculiarities that we argue about petrol rationing without reference to the number of lives likely to be saved by the withdrawal of the basic ration. Just how odd our psychology has become has been brought home to me by a paper-covered book called *Murder Most Foul* (Allen & Unwin, 3s. 6d.). The author, Mr. J. S. Dean, writes with that ferocity which the pedestrian might be expected to show against the motorist, but seldom does. After all, the motorist is in charge of a weapon much more lethal than a revolver. The road casualties between 1919 and 1945 in Britain amounted to well over four million, including 157,907 people killed. This means that some 7,000 people were killed each year as a result of motor traffic. The author argues, I think rightly, that the amount of private misery involved, as well as the prodigious public loss, is not in itself as significant of what is happening in our society as the acceptance of this slaughter as a natural and everyday affair. "Never before in all history," says Mr. Dean, "has it been the common custom to go and kill and maim people because they get in your way when you are in a hurry." He points out that before the war the worst road accidents were those in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany, with Britain third. He argues that there are close similarities between the motor slaughter and the political activities of Fascism. I should like to find an effective reply to this indictment, but I must admit there is something in it. Certainly the efforts made by the motorist to put the blame on the pedestrian and cyclist are exposed by Mr. Dean as nasty bits of hypocrisy. The fact that many pedestrians and cyclists continue to behave as if the ordinary motorist was not dangerous does not really absolve the motorist from the duty of driving as if every pedestrian and cyclist was deaf and dumb. Which brings me to my old maxim. The only way to avoid all accidents is to assume that every other motorist is a homicidal lunatic and every pedestrian a suicidal one.

* * *

I should like to think that one result of less motoring would be to strengthen the power of the non-motorist to look after his own interests and incidentally the beauty of England. We have talked a lot about national parks, but we haven't yet got one. I was delighted with the demand

in the report of the Committee on Footpaths and Access to the Countryside that long-distance footpaths free from motor traffic should be preserved across England from the Chilterns to the Devon Coast, along the Pennine Way, the South Downs, Offa's Dyke and Thames towpaths, and the Pilgrims' Way. Even more important is the proposal that the coastguard paths all round this island should be maintained for the public use. I can think of no more tempting but less defensible form of selfishness than to hog a piece of cliff and foreshore for yourself, so that you can sit watching the breakers beat on your garden wall while local workers and visitors have to walk a mile inland to get to the next bay. CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

A 5/- prize for the first entry in this column goes to S. P. Walker.

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With his formidable collection of facts Mr. Scheinfeld well and truly establishes his point that there is a biological difference between men and women.—*New Statesman and Nation.*

Godfrey Winn, the famous novelist, . . . stressed the point that although in the film there is a murder, a couple of spivs, and a girl who has a baby, it is not typical of the majority of the holiday camps.—*West London Observer.*

A genuine Kentish Yeoman's Tudor House (circa XIVth Century).—Advt. in *The Times.*

Production Designer John Bryan's set was a perfect reproduction of a well-known Durer print which shows the Market as it was in Dickens's days.—*Brighton and Hove Gazette.*

IMPRESSIONS OF HAMBURG

[*This is the first of a series of articles by Mr. H. N. Brailsford, who has spent the past summer in Germany.*]

Two pictures stand out from my memories of Hamburg. One of them recalls the past. Beside the Alster lake it is still possible to reconstruct the life of this ruined city, once the most prosperous community in Germany. Round it are the imposing outlines of the villas of the merchant princes, most of them intact, framed in trees and gardens. On the water the white sails of pleasure boats catch the brilliant sunshine. Children, released from school, are swimming and paddling, and it is only on a near view that one notices their sharp shoulder-blades and protruding ribs.

The other picture is one of ruin, endless, fantastic, mythological ruin. This picture has no frame: it runs on for ever, a film that will not stop. It began for me along the Elbe. Most of the wharves are intact, though the warehouses are empty shells. A few cranes are loading the sparsely scattered ships. Others lift their broken girders against the sky, gigantic marks of interrogation that question the future. Over the sunken wrecks in the river the tides, year after year, have ebbed and flowed. The colossal ruins of the concrete pens built to shelter flotillas of submarines yawn and sag in their immensity, useless but indestructible monuments to a bygone iniquity. The wreckage of the great shipbuilding yard of Blohm and Voss is an incredible nightmare and yet it is real, for I scrambled over it. Sixteen submarines were being assembled here, when Hamburg was taken. To-day it is a jungle of tangled briars and creepers of steel, and what our explosives have left standing of the U-boats is being cut into slices for scrap-metal. Farther down the river, some immense cranes which the Nazis stole from Holland, are being dismantled and packed into barges for the return journey. The quays are loaded with loot in process of restitution. Beside the crates that concealed the most various treasures are rows of church bells, shapely, silent and green. They are waiting in their hundreds—Catholic bells, Orthodox bells, Protestant bells, scores of tons of consecrated copper, which the Germans had not melted down. One day, in many a distant village, priest and choristers will welcome them back, and they will call the people, as they have done for centuries, to pray for peace.

Inland from the river stretch the deserts of devastation that once were Hamburg's working-class quarters. Mile upon mile they extend in two vast wildernesses of rubble. Here and there amid the chaos, someone has built a timber shelter and decorated its windows with geraniums and curtains. Suddenly one comes upon a patch of green, where the surviving population has planted potatoes and cabbages in neat beds flanked by tobacco and maize. Along the streets that still make an orderly pattern among the wreckage, the tramways are running, and they are crowded. Where, one asks, do their passengers live? Only twenty per cent. of this city's dwellings were left intact by our bombardment and these are chiefly in the more prosperous suburbs. Into these, by billeting, tens of thousands of homeless families have been packed, so that the overall average is now two persons and a half to one room. Thirty thousand persons in a population of 1,432,000 are still homeless, sleeping in shelters and schools, where they have no corner they can call their own.

One day I visited some of the still inhabited streets left standing on the edge of the working-class district. Some of these were slums that should have been demolished ten years ago, and most of them showed the traces of bombardment, though here and there they had been roughly repaired and shored up. One house had lost its roof and its garrets, but all its lower storeys were occupied. In another the staircase was open to the sky, but every room was inhabited. Most of the closets had been destroyed and water had to be carried from distant taps. One big family was the fortunate possessor of two rooms, but one of them gaped open to the street, for blast had torn the casement of its window from the wall. The amazing thing was the tidiness of these rooms, which the women, most of them elderly and frail, somehow kept clean with carried water on a negligible ration of soap. In one of them, the man, a printer, had stacked a considerable library against the crumbling walls. In several of these ramshackle houses the people had been warned that they stayed on "at their own risk." One was a big but dingy room in the basement of a totally ruined house—its tenant, a carpenter, had made it just habitable by bartering three loaves of black bread for planks. The dingiest and the most cramped of all these homes was a coal-cellar, consisting of two holes, inhabited by a family of two adults, eight children "and another coming." Not a ray of light entered it and the air was stifling. In such dungeons tuberculosis is bred, and a little boy who had just come in half-naked from the sun-baked street, seemed like so many of his playmates to carry his sentence on him, in the deathly white skin that covered his prominent bones.

Another winter of hunger and coal shortage lies ahead, but in Hamburg, as in other bombed cities, the amount of reconditioning and repair that is going on is distressingly small, and it moves at a snail's pace. Labour, even for this necessary work, is short and, as in other trades, the output of the ill-nourished men is barely 40 per cent. of normal. But the chief difficulty is the scarcity, amounting to famine, of all building materials from timber, concrete and steel down to pipes and electric fittings; and all these shortages, one by one, can be traced to the lack of coal. Material in vast quantities lies available in the rubble, and inventors have their devices for using it. I saw the simple but ingenious machines that have been adapted for grinding up broken bricks into hollow blocks of concrete, but some cement is needed for this process and it is lacking. Meanwhile, after two winters of peace, the shells of houses that might have been rebuilt are deteriorating so rapidly that most of them will have to be demolished. Clearing alone is a colossal task and five years will pass before any new building can begin. I saw a model of the future Hamburg which the city's chief architect has designed. The new main avenues for traffic are impressive and the plan for the workers' districts, designed to give the maximum of light and air, to shut out noise and spread green spaces between all the rows of tenements, was a happy sight for the eye of faith. In these vast spaces private property in land will cease to exist: the former owners will be compensated with shares in a common pool. This is a pleasant dream for the next generation, but the dwellers in Hamburg's slums would barter these distant prospects for the timber and concrete that would repair even a few of the blasted streets.

Of what is Hamburg thinking? Chiefly of shelter and food. The broad facts about food, as I got them from a high British source, are these. The daily rations at the end of July amounted for the "basic consumer" to 1,180 calories—on paper. In fact, much less was obtainable—four little carrots, for example, were all that materialized out of a month's ration of 12lb of vegetables. When the harvest is fully realised, the ration should rise to 1,500 calories. This will just suffice to keep a man alive at "a low rate of metabolism," or, in plain English, if he lies in bed all day and does no work. A tentative investigation by "Gallup" methods showed that 25 per cent. of the population were really living on this diet of 1,180 calories. The worst cases were those who live alone, especially the aged. In other words, in Hamburg, about 350,000 persons are living on a Belsen level. At the other extreme another 25 per cent. are reasonably well off. Half the population, including the "heavy" manual workers, are in a middle category. They get, in addition to the daily "basic" ration of 1,180 units, 310 as a supplement; and on an average they get a further 400 calories from their vegetable gardens, from parcels from abroad, or from the black market.

This adds up to 1,890 calories, as against our standard British ration of 2,850. One needs no further explanation of the drop in the output of the average worker. In this miserable diet, fats and sugar are specially deficient. Brain workers, including every sort of minor official, are in a peculiarly unhappy plight, for they get no supplementary ration, and their incomes do not run to much dealing on the black market. The teachers are too often elderly men and women, who may have to grapple with classes of 50 or 60 pupils. In the universities, the professors who also tend to be elderly and have to instruct overgrown classes, are in the same case. Some are too scrupulous and others too poor for black market dealings. I have met famous scientists so under-fed that work was for them an intolerable strain. The Russians have been in this matter more generous and enlightened than the British. They place intellectual workers in the highest category for rations, with the result that Berlin is attracting the best talent in Germany, especially in its theatres.

Over the first six months of this year, Hamburg's death rate averaged 16 per 1,000 p.a. and its birth-rate 13. It has been spared epidemics. The number of victims of the ghastly disease of hunger-dropsy (œdema) shot up from 650 admitted to hospital in April to 738 at the end of June, but there were many slighter cases. The really alarming scourge is tuberculosis. In Hamburg alone there are over 3,000 "open" infectious cases, and every effort of the medical authorities to obtain from the British military command an unwanted hospital or barracks in which they might be isolated and treated, has so far been in vain. Standing for hours in queues and packed in tramways and trains, these stricken people are infecting their ill-fed neighbours, whose resistance is at a low ebb. There are also in Hamburg at least 20,000 less serious cases, which call for treatment. In the British Zone as a whole there are known to be 50,000 "open" cases and only 12,000 available hospital beds, while the less serious cases number about

150,000. A famous physician, a Nobel prizeman, told me that he trembles every day for the children, his own among them, who must go to school in the crowded trams. He pleaded urgently for the conversion of the old Nazi barracks into hospitals. Tuberculosis is, he insisted, not merely the worst danger that threatens the German people: it is a European peril. It will not stop at the frontiers, nor will the Channel hold it at bay. If we allow it to gather momentum, he predicted that in seven years it will be a plague beyond our power to control.

While I am writing of housing and hospitals, I cannot refrain from reporting the bitterness which the extravagant claims of the military command for accommodation are causing. The army is much too numerous and it occupies more buildings than it needs. Like Mr. Gollancz, I was shocked by the sight of "Victory House," a colossal modern building, which has been turned into a recreation centre for the troops. Its vast rooms were almost empty when I visited it. A quarter of it would suffice for this proper and necessary purpose, yet further space is being made ready under its roof. Then there is the famous hotel, *Vier Jahreszeiten*, which has been taken over as officers' quarters. It has three hundred bedrooms, with a hundred servants, and it houses twenty-five British officers. As their "country club" the officers of the garrison have taken over in the outskirts of Hamburg one of the most famous modern buildings in Germany, a palace set in a park, which belonged to a tobacco millionaire. It has its covered swimming pool, its golf course and its tennis courts. But I found the city's architects grappling with the estimates for an additional building of two storeys, containing four squash courts, a kitchen and much else. This by a peremptory military order must be built at once. I tried to reckon out how many homeless workers' families might be rehoused by Hamburg's standards of austerity with the concrete which these squash courts will require. "All that has happened," as a Socialist Senator put it, "is that militarism has changed its nationality."

H. N. Brailsford

ALDERNEY'S CROWDED HOUR

On a bright, breezy autumn day, when the wide steel-blue Channel looked even wider and bluer than usual, and the little island ringed with red-brown granite cliffs seemed even smaller and more out of the world, His Majesty's Secretary of State for Home Affairs appeared in the air over Alderney.

The three square miles of grass and stubble seemed quite easy to miss, the airfield even easier.

"When you take off," said the airman beside me on the ground, "you sort of drop down below the cliffs before you start to climb. You have to know every inch of the field, because there aren't many inches."

"Too many, just the same," said the farmer. "Every inch of that airfield means an inch off *our* fields. And they won't even let us tether our cows between the runways!"

The plane landed and taxied up. Out stepped Mr. Chuter Ede, Viscount Stansgate and Mr. Osbert Peake, M.P., Committee of Inquiry of the Privy Council. Up to greet them went General Sir Philip Neame, Lieutenant-governor of the Bailiwick of Guernsey (and Alderney) and Judge F. G. French, C.B.E., head of Alderney's judiciary and of its States, or parliament.

In the background—rather noticeably in the background—stood the six jurats, the island's elite, the permanent members of the States. They watched with dignity while the committee swept past them and drove away to inspect the Militia Arsenal, which had been prepared as the seat of the inquiry.

The distinguished visitors were there to inquire into the form of government of the island, its administration, and its economic present and future—matters certainly worth inquiring into. Apart from a certain sympathy for the 800 remaining inhabitants of an impoverished little scrap of an impoverished Empire, people in the great world might have been expected to pay little heed to the affair.

But somehow it was not so. Fleet Street smelt a scandal, and Fleet Street descended on the little airfield in a series of expensive charter planes that quite astonished the airways organisation (one very young controller, two hostesses and a groundsman-baggageman-coachdriver).

Scandal—or, say, insinuation—did not lack, but there was more to it than that. As the inquiry proceeded, the picture of Alderney emerged as a microcosm of the old world faced with the new age. Economically, Alderney is as Europe—ravaged by the war, denuded of almost all assets, unable to exist without importing even the necessities of life, unable to import without exporting, unable to export without reconstructing on a scale beyond its powers.

Politically, the picture also suggested parallels with greater nations. Alderney's 800 citizens do not want to be planned. They do not want to surrender their ancient rights or liberties or the total independence (in a nominal sense at least) of their archaic autonomy. When it was pointed out that their system did not provide for any general elections, and that only 291 of the 800 are electors anyway, witnesses replied that the jurats could be replaced when they reached 70, and the douzaniers and people's deputies (the rest of the parliament, with a limited voice and vote) could be replaced even more frequently than that.

As for income tax, no thank you. The witnesses explained that each year, each man's property is assessed anew—his land by rough measurement, his bank account and jewels by guesswork—and on that total wealth he is taxed.

"And," suggested judicially jocular Chuter Ede "if he doesn't complain, you realise you have slightly under-assessed him?"

It was agreed that the ancient system of inheritance by which a man's land, at his death, is divided among all his children, two-thirds to the sons, one-third to the daughters, had led to a state of land tenure where a man wishing to plant a small plot of potatoes might have to make separate agreements with fifteen or twenty owners of scraps of the field. (The tiny airfield has 100 separate owners).

But, said the witnesses, although it sounds difficult, it works very well in practice.

"We cherish our land," said one.

They do. They are Normans, pure Normans, and though one lump of a field may bring in only a shilling a year, they cling to it. They claim that gradually the farmers are consolidating their holdings, but there's not much evidence of it.

When France fell, Judge French decided the Germans would invade and that they wouldn't feed useless mouths on an island which could not begin to support itself. So 1,400 people left at a moment's notice, taking almost nothing with them.

The Germans invaded, turned the island into a fortress, covering it with concrete and steel, barbed wire and trenches, knocking down or walling up houses, burning furniture and almost all the woodwork in their fires.

After liberation the British Government spent a great deal of money and a vast amount of military and civilian labour, and considerable explosives, trying to clear the place up. But great areas of precious land are still useless.

And all the boundary stones marking the innumerable bits of land were gone. And there was no written record of survey map, if there ever had been.

So the British Government started to farm the island as a collective farm. But the Normans did not take to collectivism. They wanted their own bits back. They said the farm manager didn't understand farming, at least Alderney farming; that he wasted some land and planted other land with crops that he later ploughed in. He had his side of it.

In any case the communal farm didn't work. Now 18 farmers have started up, as against 40 pre-war, with 100 cattle against 800. The granite quarry hasn't restarted. Alderney granite was a famous and valuable export; at least it supplied jobs. Fishing hasn't restarted. There are only two boats (one of them a deathtrap, said a fisherman witness) and almost no gear.

So that there is no work, and the young people have had to stay away to work elsewhere. A very high percentage of the 800 people are old or middle-aged, or young children. Secondary school children have to go to Guernsey or do without.

What to do? The Privy Councillors will give their advice, no doubt. One suggestion has been to link up with Guernsey, and send members to Guernsey's States. It was probably unfortunate that the only person to raise this suggestion at the inquiry was a Mr. Piper, managing director of Hampstead Garden Suburb, who admitted he was merely a frequent visitor, owning an island house, but not intending to live there. When he said 50 per cent. of the islanders would support his suggestion to join Guernsey, 100 per cent. of the audience made the loudest and most derisive noise the Privy Council Committee heard at any time.

Another gentleman said his company were interested in starting growing tomatoes under glass, as in Guernsey. But it would cost a lot of money, and there's none among the islanders. If the company can get capital outside, they would at least get work among the tomatoes.

Witness after witness related personal tales of woe—houses almost uninhabitable; furniture, such of it as the Germans left, shared out by arbitrary rationing, or by a series of "rushes" like the land-rushes of pioneer America. Judge French said it was all that could be done. Judge French seems to have tried to bring order out of ruin, but the islanders, who used to like his rule, now resent his alleged dictatorship. People's Deputy Herivel, an island demagogue, said all the islanders would sign a petition for the judge's removal. The judge then announced he had resigned weeks before. Herivel withdrew his charges. In the night, while Fleet Street queued up in Judge French's wooden office to use the only telephone on the island, a red glow appeared over the south-west corner of the isle. Someone said a plane carrying a pressman back to England was missing. I found Sergeant Sykes, former London bobby and the island's police force—the only man I met optimistic about the island's future—leading a small party who were trying to beat out a blazing line of gorse in the teeth of a rising wind.

We carried his appeal to the fire brigade, which went out and then found it couldn't get any water, and I went out again with Judge French. We tramped through hot grass, fell into trenches and over barbed wire entanglements in the red and black night. The judge most politely asked a little man beside us to fetch Sergeant Sykes. The little man agreed with dignity, and disappeared in the red haze.

Later, when the fire had died down, I met the little man in the Rose and Crown.

"I fixed him!" he told me. "Me fetch Sykes for him? Not me."

The juvenile air controller arrived and reported that the missing plane had landed safely in England, remote England, but had failed to report in correctly.

Fleet Street had another drink over a comrade safe and sound.

The Salvation Army band came clumping and squeaking down the cobbled street. "One of those lassies is quite nice looking," said a newspaperman with pleasurable surprise.

The dawn came up over the vast sea and the tiny isle with its patch of burned grass, and its hundred tethered cows. (They say even the Alderney breed is dying; there isn't a pure Alderney bull left. So they say.) The sea beat on the granite cliffs and no boats went out to fish. The granite quarry stood idle. Only the innkeepers and boarding-house keepers reported a

good tourist season. The charm of the isle is an asset that remains. But the isle has no steamer of its own.

Out at the airfield the young controller and the two hostesses and the groundsman turned out in force. The visiting airman, who wanted to start a freight service, but said he had to give the airways three days' notice in writing before he could land, watched to see whether the plane dropped over the cliffs in taking off. It didn't.

The farmer spat in the wasted grass between the runways.

And His Majesty's Secretary of State for Home Affairs, with his colleagues, disappeared into the blue.

COLIN WILLS

COMFORT YE, MY PEOPLE

"It will take me to stop over the night," the mother said. "I could never get the half-six back and me with so much to do. I'm better to get all done when I'm in the town and save another journey. Ay, I'll stop over with your Aunt Mary. You must all do as you're bid, now," she said to the younger boys, "and give Dermot no trouble. Close up the fowl at ten, and see after the cattle to-night and in the morning—do you hear me, Brendan?"

Brendan, the youngest, was trying to corner a tortoise-shell butterfly on the little window pane. He said "yes" without pausing in the chase. The other boys said nothing at all. She wanted some reassurance from them, some acknowledgment at least, but they just lounged around her, as though waiting for her to leave. She felt their disdain for womanly fuss. Boys took everything for granted—it was no use talking to them. Sometimes she wished that God had sent her a daughter. A girl would understand the importance of the little things. . . .

The little things that mattered. Now had she forgotten anything? She looked round the dim kitchen. At the big black hearth with its pit of peat ash. At the brown painted dresser with its ill-fitting drawers and the few faded dishes on it. At the holy picture of the Sacred Heart—the lamp was all right. She looked up at the chimney piece, and the little tin clock told her to hurry. She looked lingeringly at Brendan's back, at Paddy and Tony, quiet now but ready to slip the leash the minute she was out of sight. She looked at Dermot, her eldest boy, eighteen now and the man of the house. He was sitting on the old horsehair couch, leaning his elbows on the white scrubbed table.

She followed his eyes to the two crumpled notes and the coins which lay beside her bags and baskets. Oil and flour to buy, and seed, and groceries and wool and odds-and-ends. A lamp and a spade. Medicine for the cow, and the Doctor's bill. Oatmeal. Boots for Brendan.

"It wouldn't do it," she thought, "we must just try to do without something."

"It wouldn't look at it," Dermot thought, "we'll have to work the harder."

But sure there was nothing to work at. Only two acres and a half that they could labour. Only nine beasts that they could ever graze. No feeding worth, but for a handful of fowl. Nothing, only the wild birds' eggs—that was the only hope of cash money. For she wouldn't let him go away to work in the town. She would let Paddy go when he got old enough; she would never let him. He was the farmer now, since the old fellow died. The farmer! Laughable! Farming nine acres of heathery rocks. Bog cotton and bulrushes! No. No outlet at all, but for the eggs. But six shillings a dozen for seabirds' eggs was good picking, sure enough. They would get a wheen of them while she was away and have a bit of cash about the place for when she got back.

"Well, I'm for off, now," the mother said. "God keep yous all. Be good boys, till your mother gets back." Her voice trembled a little as she finished, and she waited a second for some sign from them. None came. They didn't seem to care. They barely took time off from their own thoughts to say goodbye to her. She remembered the times when it had been different, when they had been helpless and needed her for everything in the world. Needed her morning, noon and night and would have died every day without her. You lift them up into strength, she thought, and they turn away from you and forget. A little girl, maybe, would have told her not to worry—but that's what she'd never have now. Ah well, they were in the hands of God. She gathered up her load. She trudged off down the mauve clay loanen, hobbling over the sun-baked wheel ruts.

Later, Dermot and Paddy took up the tackle and set off for the cliffs. The dry heather crunched and crackled under their feet as they strode over the top to the sea. The warm breeze stroked their cheeks. At places their boots clinked on the bare rough rock itself. Hill grazing, Dermot thought, ten shillings an acre! Was there ever such a cod of a farm?

Pipits sprang from the boys' path, fluttered up clear of the heather and then lay down on the wind and let it sweep them away to safety. A stonechat bobbed and rattled at them from the top of a dry-built wall. A great black-backed gull paused to wheel over them, to glare at them with its pale grey eye and murmur "ha-ha-ha."

Soon they reached the cliff edge and Dermot looked down at the slowly-swirling sea. The green water writhed thickly among the black rocks far away below. The gulls sailed out from the face with slow sad cries, slow as the sea itself. The auks began to circle round the boys. Razorbill, guillemot and puffin whirring by quietly, all in one direction, all looking back over their shoulders as they passed. They always did the same, but Dermot never tired of watching them. Now he picked out a puffin and let his eye follow it on its orbit. It swept out over the ocean on still planes, out and down. Down to the surface of the sea, and round in a great stiff curve, gaining speed to bring it up again and round again and down again, in the never-ending stream of black and white bullet-shaped birds. And every time it came level with Dermot's head the puffin turned its proud white face to stare at him silently, haughtily. It seemed to say, "Come, follow me."

I have you, the boy thought, neat as you are, and strong in the air. I can get to your nest as sure as you can yourself and then you can sweep about and show off to the sea with nothing to come home to but the bare clay itself.

"See over yonder, Dermot," Paddy was saying, excited as ever, "see below the white mark on the rock. See the razorbills hatchin' all the way down—An' there's a bank of puffins that you might reach, too."

"I might and I mightn't," Dermot said. He was studying the cliff.

"You'd get the queer haul of razorbills anyhow! That's the place all right."

"Have you it marked in your mind?"

"I have."

"Come on ahead then."

They walked along the cliff top. Paddy stopped at a high thistle.

"Here's it," he said, "right under here."

They drove the crowbar into the turf but it grated on the rock. They cast about and found a place where the soil was deeper. When they judged the bar firm enough they hitched the rope round it and threw the long end over the cliff. Paddy gave the short end a couple of turns round his waist. He set his heels in the turf and leaned back with a flourish.

"Go ahead." he said.

Dermot spat on his hands and gripped the rope. Then he lay down flat on the wiry grass and worked his legs backwards out over the edge of the cliff.

He climbed downwards, bracing his feet against the rock to keep his body out from the crumbling face. The razorbills whistled past his back, so close that he could hear the rustling of their pinions and the frip and flutter of their swerve. As he reached their nesting ledges he packed his haversack with the great pear-shaped eggs, heavy and rough-shelled, coloured topaz, ultramarine and lapis lazuli, and blotched with gobs of velvet brown. A tanner a time, he said to himself, a tanner a time. Sixteen for a new lamp, thirty-two for a pair of shoes, forty would rent two acres for a year.

Once, when he stretched out sideways, the rotten basalt crumbled under his feet. His hands tightened on the rope and his eye followed the rock's fall. Down, down, down,—down to the wet black boulders far below, to strike with a muffled crack and a puff of dust and splinters and to bound off again like a moutain sheep, far out into the water, with a proud plume of spray to mark its end. Dermot began a prayer, and laughed at himself and went on with the work.

Soon he came to the end of the rope. The bag was only half full, so he pressed his feet against the rock and leant out to look for the puffins' nests. He could just see them beyond a spur of cliff, fifty feet along and slightly below him. The rope would be no further use—could he manage without it?

A narrow ledge led to the spur. It sloped steeply outwards and downwards, part grass-covered part dust. Above it, a few handholds in the red, broken wall. It was hard work to climb up to the top and come down again further along—hard work for half a bagful of eggs. And sure, the crowbar wouldn't hold over above the puffins; they had tried it there and the turf was too thin. It was get them now or leave them, he decided. He started out along the ledge and left the rope dancing freely behind him.

Dermot pressed in against the rocks. He tugged at every handhold before he trusted it, and often he lifted out a lump of rusty red stuff and crumbled it like a biscuit in his fist. He kicked the dust from the ledge and hacked it with his heel before he placed each foot, and sometimes the stone broke away and sped down silently and bounded from the boulders at the bottom. At last he came to the spur.

Now the boy saw that it was impossible to go any further. Where the basalt hung out over the sea, where it had jutted into the wind and rain, it was flaked and crazed like dry clay. Tons of it hung there in suspense, undercut, criss-crossed with black cracks and fissures.

He rested for a little while, with his left foot on firm rock, his right hand gripping a little knob overhead. His other hand could find only wiry grass to hold; his other leg hung from his hip for there was no resting place for it. He looked back at the way he had come. It was the way he must go back.

Between him and the rope stretched the narrow sloping ledge. It was scarred and broken with his passage. It wouldn't do. It couldn't be done. But there was no other way; he couldn't even move to look for another way. He'd have to do it. Ah, no; he couldn't stand it; he'd stay where he was. He'd hold on for ever. He allowed himself to whimper out loud like a little boy—"Mamma, come and help me; mamma, Dermot's frightened."

Then his mind turned to the puffins whirring close to his back, patiently, endlessly . . . he let his eyes follow them again as they hurtled down to the green water. The sea shimmered and writhed like a mass of maggots. His stomach stirred within him and a cold tremor ran through his loins. Then he felt a weakness creep into him. He wrenched his eyes from the beckoning birds and looked upwards,—up to the black cliff-top towering high above him, swaying out to crash down on him. Clouds raced over-head, pouring over the edge and out to sea. They drew his head back to follow them, and then he felt the handhold snap and come with him.

"Hail Mary, Mother of God . . ." he breathed it with relief. He felt himself turning slowly over and over . . . sailing like a puffin to the sea . . . Mother of God . . . and warm water . . . rolling over . . . eyes closed . . . gently . . . over, over . . . and a great blinding flash of blue-white light.

JOHN D. STEWART

The Arts and Entertainment

A NEW "STABAT MATER"

THE English Opera Group gave last week the first English performance (repeated the following night for the Third Programme) of a specially commissioned *Stabat Mater* by Lennox Berkeley. The work was intended for concert performance in connection with the recent European tour of Benjamin Britten's two chamber operas, and it is therefore written for similar forces—six solo singers and chamber orchestra. It falls into ten sections, some for the solo voices, some for ensemble, which correspond to the ten six-line stanzas of the poem.

Lennox Berkeley has always been exceptional among English composers for the delicacy of his ear in the matter of texture and colour, and he evidently finds the absence of conventional chorus and full orchestra no handicap, but an exciting invitation to directness and clarity. The most striking things in this *Stabat Mater* are the imaginative and expressive instrumental inventions, such as the soft climbing horn sequence at "pertransivit gladius," the accompaniment to "dum emisit spiritum," and the brief postlude to the contralto solo. It occurred to me at a first hearing that the composer was slower to warm up to the specifically vocal side of his task; unlike Britten, he has been predominantly an instrumental composer, and in the earlier sections of the work the writing for the soloists (particularly for the men) is apt to sound ungrateful and unmelodic. Later on, however, there is a beautiful contralto solo ("Fac me vere") for Nancy Evans; and to Margaret Ritchie there falls a most uncommon and moving coloratura passage, inspired by the mystical idea of the Christian soul intoxicated by the contemplation of Our Lord's sufferings ("Fac me plagis vulnerari, cruce hac inebriari, ob amorem Filii"). I am not quite convinced of the success of this *Stabat Mater* as a whole; but its incidental beauties are such as to make one look forward to many repetitions and the early publication of the score.

The recent reappearance of Arthur Rubinstein shows that he is still unsurpassed among contemporary pianists in sheer brilliance and dash (as opposed to pianola-like efficiency), and unequalled in the purity and sensibility of his Chopin style, not to mention the ravishing tone with which he indulges the ear. The Viennese *Figaro* (which I heard over the air) was immensely superior to the recent Edinburgh revival in accuracy, instrumental polish and general level of singing. I liked best Hilde Gueden's Cherubino; Irmgard Seefried's Susanna was as charming as was to be expected, but she must abandon that little trick of just touching a high note and then immediately cutting off the flow of tone, so that the *legato* of the phrase is ruined. As so often happens, the Count and Countess were musically no match for their servants.

DESMOND SHAWE-TAYLOR

RADIO NOTES

EXCITEMENT is infectious, and intellectual excitement as infectious as any other form. Radio is a quicker medium than print for the transmission of excitement; a spoken sentence "fired in anger" can hit as heavily as a whole page printed. That is why I found Geoffrey Pyke's brief talk on the dynamics of innovation, the need to treat new ideas with good manners, an outstanding broadcast. He was urgent and intimate at the same time; he bristled at the listener and then chuckled with him; he stuttered with indignation at the chances we as a nation miss, the world misses, by our sluggish resistance to change. A stutter can be the most painful experience possible for the listener; Pyke achieved with his a friendly closeness to his audience and the same pointing of his argument that Priestley gets from a ruminative pause, and then a sentence spoken briskly, in the tone of a man who has just made up his mind what he thinks. Radio talks are too often not talks but lectures, the conscientious reading of a script; the first requirement of radio, one that Pyke met as few do, is that spoken words should not seem to be words read.

In sad contrast was a discussion between architects on the same evening: eminent gentlemen agreeing with each other blandly. One expert was so impressed with the other's eloquence on the importance of architecture that he lost his place in the script, and had to be prompted audibly. It was the only discussion that the Third Programme had given us for six or seven weeks, apart from a talk on the cinema, in which the speakers complimented each other, and the strongest phrase expressing difference was "isn't that a bit sweeping?" This is scarcely to be called discussion; and the Third Programme's lack of debate, of dialectic, is probably its weakest aspect.

It does not lack the provocative. A column and a half in last week's *Listener* is given to letters answering Christopher Hollis on Karl Marx: Geoffrey Pyke's talk was one of three in which far from orthodox viewpoints were expressed; an outline of Professor Northrop's searching book, *The Meeting of East and West*, was broadcast in August and repeated last week. What seems to be lacking is not courage but an adequate technique.

Here I differ from W. E. Williams, whose comments on the work of the Third Programme in its first year were broadcast last week; he spoke of the "timidity" of this Programme's handling of social and political questions. Too little time is given to such questions, yet no one should be called timid who lets loose on us Geoffrey Pyke, or makes us concentrate on Señor Madariaga. But to-day it is not particularly useful to deal with ideas without relating them to the arguments opposed to them. We who live in the moral vacuum between two solid areas of belief will not accept an idea, will not even accept or reject it enough to be interested in it, until we have heard it contradicted.

This contradiction can be first-rate entertainment, as the original Brains Trust was; it can be more than entertainment, as were the discussions between editors last winter. Good radio material often uses it, even when it is not formally called discussion: Vernon Bartlett began his talk on Japan with two sentences reminding us of past ideas held by many people about the defeated nations; then, "things haven't turned out quite like that," followed by his reasons. The good manners that Geoffrey Pyke advocated so warmly do not consist in setting out new ideas naked, in our cold climate; a decent respect for them gives them the warmth of argument.

TOM WINTRINGHAM

THE MOVIES

"Ivy," at the Odeon
"The Big Heart," at the Gaumont
"Au Petit Bonheur" and "Dead of Night," at Studio One

Hollywood loves dearly to have it both ways. To be the great composer *and* to compose the song-hit of the season. To be a shortsighted frump *and* (throwing away spectacles and complexes) the belle of Cincinatti. To retire to a little old cottage *and* organise there, bridge drives, hunt balls and the biggest barbecue ever known. Opulence shines out of the average American film like the poetry Shakespeare gives even to his meaner characters. It is the Californian sunlight. It gilds the gingerbread and the oatcake. Without it where should we look for the transports of style?

Ivy, an Edwardian murder case, I take to be a drama of poverty. The Lexingtons are discovered miserably. "I've put the sixpence in the gas," says Miss Joan Fontaine, ravishing in dress as in looks: "Oh, if our friends could see us living here!" For the friends, of course, go in for yachts and ballrooms

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and spank to the coast in coaches to see Blériot land. Then, looking a picture, she trapeses along the slum alley and has her hand read to a spinet accompaniment. Terrible things are seen there that can't even be mentioned But it's so awkward, in all those silks and things, living without an address; who can blame Miss Fontaine if she wheedles the yachtsman (Mr. Herbert Marshall) to give her husband a job and lend them the flat that's all pillars outside and beading within? Now at least, we understand, they have £1,000 a year, dinner parties, bills, one Cockney servant, and cupboards to hang the dresses in. The flat, however, is only theirs till its owner comes back. Something must be done. So she poisons her husband —he *is* rather an ass; and her truculent but faithful lover, hiding out as a slum doctor, can be trusted to swing for her, because never surely was there so enchanting a murderess in London, England. And there, but for Sir Cedric Hardwicke, of Scotland Yard, the affair would have rested, with sleepy Mr. Marshall and wide-awake Miss Fontaine enjoying the debentures of our dreams. As it is she has to fall precipitately down a lift shaft.

Average melodrama perhaps, but good to look at. Are the fashions as un-Edwardian as the interiors and the coaches-and-four? Never mind, they suit Miss Fontaine, who dazzles the more for that ambience of wealth she is supposed to be desperately flirting for.

In *The Big Heart* Mr. Edmund Gwenn delights us with a snowy beard and the delusion that he is Father Christmas. This is a sort of *Mr. Deeds Comes Down the Chimney*, except that its story of innocence reminds us most of the time of the fairy-tales we read in advertisements. Hollywood has tried here to have it both ways by pretending that a nursery fable and an annual commercial racket are one and the same thing. The film is for grown-up children, but does not lack charm and some incidental satire, rather heavily trimmed with cotton-wool.

Au Petit Bonheur might have been exported to remind us how tedious the average French farce, on stage or screen, can be. There is a grand climax when the wife (Danielle Darrieux) and the lover (who is not a lover) stage a passionate scene for the sake of the husband (behind the bathroom door), who must be made jealous but who has fallen asleep from a sleeping draught. If he'd seen the film he wouldn't have needed any drugs. Mlle. Darrieux occasionally manages to fling a little fun, but for this week's eyeful give me Miss Fontaine. *Dead of Night*, Ealing's compendium of eerie tales, revives very well in the same programme, and I was glad to encounter again the spree on the links and the grim ventriloquist's doll before the *farceurs* came on.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT

Correspondence

SKIRTS

SIR,—For many of the reasons that Miss Cochrane advances and for the purely frivolous one, that it makes a change, I too like the longer skirt. Is not the question of taste, however, irrelevant to the main issue? For if we understand the nature of the economic crisis and desire to see this country recover, we must try to make do as far as possible with the clothes we have got. To lower the skirt by so much as an inch at this period must eventually affect our economies adversely. For what is the use of buying even one longer dress if it cannot be worn under any existing coat?

When Miss Cochrane and, for that matter, M. Caldages advance the cause of the longer skirt in the name of economy, it seems that they are carrying their enthusiasm just a little beyond the bounds of reason. If the new skirts were really narrow they would split easily while jumping on and off buses. If they wish to find good social implications for the longer skirt, they might do better to invoke the subtleties of the psychologist, who might discover in the new style an encouragement to the birth-rate in that it favours the pregnant figure.

In the meanwhile, I know from daily contact with working girls who take a pride in their clothes, that they are thrown into a quandary. I heard one of them saying, "I don't know whether to try to scrounge a lot of coupons and sell off my clothes or just appear dowdy?"

This leads to a further point which seems hardly less important than the financial one. Mr. Orwell in his book on the British people has pointed out how, slowly but gradually, class barriers have been breaking down in this country. He attributes this in part to the prevailing women's fashions which make working girls often almost indistinguishable from the wealthy. If the new fashion prevails it is obvious that the well to do will find the labour and the means to renovate their wardrobes whereas the majority of working girls will not. This may again tend to widen the gulf between the classes.

The question now remains, is the "battle of the skirt" already lost? Or is there anything we can do to back up the appeal of Sir Stafford Cripps? Phrases in the newspapers such as, "you will be smart this winter if you wear your dress calf length," are appearing with depressing frequency. This also goes for photographs of the new fashions, one of the first of which appeared in, of all papers, *The Daily Herald*. The fact that Princess Elizabeth's trousseau will be calf length must be counted as one of the major victories for the vested interests of the fashion houses. That in itself, almost gives the new style official status.

There is, however, one really encouraging sign. There is a rumour that the Rank organisation will continue to dress its film stars in short skirts. If we accept the fact that one of the major influences on fashion is the film, let us hope that the Rank organisation will receive the maximum possible support in this move. Let us have as many photographs as possible of film stars in short skirts, or at least as many as we have had recently of Paris models.

Mr. George Benda, fashion designer for M.G.M. London films, has stated bluntly that his company will dress stars in the new long styles and the wider the better. Sir Alexander Korda, however, is noncommital, which may mean that he has not yet made up his mind. A statement from Michael Balcon, who has always had British interests at heart, would also carry much weight.

In the meantime in London restaurants the longer skirt is appearing with increasing frequency. If by next winter I also wear my clothes mid-calf length, it will be for the same reason that Critic may not have responded to the appeal of the Board of Trade for the abandonment of the trouser turn-up. Namely, that in the standard of dress I do not care to differ too conspicuously from my friends. Nor do I believe it would serve any useful purpose if I did. I would follow the fashion, *albeit* tardily and reluctantly. This I believe, is one of the prevailing moods of women who take a pride in their clothes.

Hollyberry House, N.W.3. JILL CRAIGIE

Sir,—Perhaps the following notes on the new skirt lengths will interest Critic.

1. Surely all fashion is anti-social? In its narrowest sense today it means new clothes which few of us need actually to cover our bodies. If we followed Critic's wishes to their conclusion, we would never buy anything new until everybody has a chance of getting it.

2. Fashion, for some time, has been trying to make woman more feminine in contrast to the masculine line of the '20s and '30s. Narrow shoulders and smaller waists call for longer skirts as part of this scheme. Furthermore, the so-called short skirt has been in fashion for twenty-five years. This is about the maximum for fashion.

3. Most women welcome the change, but men, like Critic, are puzzled by it, as they are meant to be.

Some women also protest, as they do at any new fashion, because they don't like the effort of a new mental attitude which new fashions require.

4. All genuine changes in fashion are gradual,

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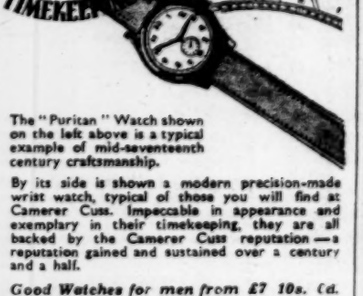

The "Puritan" Watch shown on the left above is a typical example of mid-seventeenth century craftsmanship.

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and skirts have been gradually getting longer during the past seasons. Now the speed has been accelerated for the following reasons :

(a) Paris has lengthened skirts more violently than elsewhere because she feels them to be artistically correct, which is her only criterion, and because her business is the creation of fashion for its own sake.

(b) America did the same to celebrate the lifting last Autumn of the L.85 Regulations which restricted skirts even more than did our own Austerity.

(c) The American fashion industry has played up the situations outlined in (a) and (b) because it ensured that the large stores, where slumps were greatly feared in the Spring, would maintain their turnovers since the very fashion-conscious American public would be likely to feel it necessary to change their wardrobes completely.

(d) London has a reputation for good clothes as distinct from the highly fashionable, and demonstrates trends more conservatively. But even so, we have had to lengthen skirts sent to America this Autumn by nearly two inches.

New fashions, however, are seldom created for solely commercial reasons. It should be noted that designers in Paris, New York and London have all been making longer skirts simultaneously, because they felt them to be right—in the same way that all the designers in Paris felt them to be right. Contrary to what is often thought, there is no getting together of designers before launching something new.

5. The Board of Trade would, of course, be unwise to meddle with fashion, particularly as Sir Stafford is said to be " mad about designers." It is very difficult to design for export only—in a void as it were. Furthermore, the Americans are sensitive on this point and repeatedly say they want to buy typically British clothes. This snob appeal would disappear rapidly if our public were to wear clothes considered by them to be dowdy.

6. From a cloth point of view the fashion is, of course, screwy, but I feel many critics are merely using this stick in revenge for the feeling described in paragraph 3.

Furthermore, the new length for London (14½ to 15 inches from the ground) can usually be achieved by letting down the hem which most good clothes have. Women are being let down gradually in every sense of the word.

7. As regards aesthetics, most people who have seen the new collections are enthusiastic. The daily papers have given reports of the more exaggerated styles and have inflamed resentment.

8. Broadly speaking, the whole movement is part of a plan to emphasise women's best characteristics—curved shoulders, high busts, small waists, full hips and a good carriage. Speaking very personally, I feel that this must lead to more satisfactory relations between men and women, and in general to what the Americans call a more " gracious " way of living.

The new clothes are, in a sense, a kind of protest against the feverish ill-planned years of the '20s and '30s—the era of the Bright Young Thing. I hope they mean order, peace and plenty; order because everything is in its place: peace because they avoid that sharp cutting off of the line at the knee: and plenty because they are not skimpy. This is, no doubt, wishful thinking, but as Critic says, it seems to be what the sheep want.

14 Saville Row, W.1. HARDY AMIES

BASIC

SIR,—As a Member for a motoring constituency, I would gladly approve your leading article on Petrol Rationing; as a Member of Parliament I must disagree with it.

The main purpose of abolishing the basic petrol ration is to reduce dollar expenditure. Your justified criticism that a substantial cut has not yet been made in the projected Service expenditure of £32 million for petrol this year, does not invalidate the case for saving, by your own estimate, £6 million of dollars in this way. Service cuts must be additional not alternative to civilian cuts.

£6 million of dollars can buy over 10 million bushels of wheat. If, therefore, I am asked whether I favour cutting the petrol ration or the bread ration, my answer is that I am on the side of the bread.

Measured by that standard, I find your other arguments—the strain on transport, the exasperation of queues and the burden on Regional Petroleum Boards—of less weight than they might otherwise have been. The petroleum officers will somehow cope with the deluge of " supplementary " applicants; the transport system will somehow carry its added passengers; and people will somehow endure the discomforts of travel. In other words, the inconveniences of the austerity which you say, " should be accepted if disaster is to be avoided," will be endured and overcome.

But we show ourselves ill-prepared for the economic life-struggle, which you recognise so clearly, if we cry out when tightening the first notch in our belt.

House of Commons. MAURICE EDELMAN

"THE BATTLE FOR BRITAIN"

SIR,—We are sorry that the feature programme " The Battle for Britain " was not the *kind* of programme that Mr. Tom Wintringham thought it should have been. His main complaint seems to have been that we did not broadcast a hymn of praise to the heroism of the fighter pilots and to the steadfast spirit of the British people.

We saw no purpose in retelling this well-told and well-known story. We set out to tell what had not been told before . . . the story behind the spirit . . . and we were careful to say at the start of the programme " This is not an attempt to reconstruct and refight the aerial ' Battle of Britain ' . . . it is the inside story of German plan and British counter-plan; of German action and British counter-action in the struggle that saved this country from invasion."

Mr. Wintringham seems to have been disappointed too in our failure to apportion the blame for the blunders and failures of those who by their wilful neglect or blindness in the pre-war years left this country so exposed to danger in 1940. Reference to them was omitted, because within the limits of a sixty-minute documentary our aim was to present new and not generally known facts which we considered of greater interest and importance today; not because of any " deference to politicians' feelings."

However unprepared this country was in other respects, there can be no doubt that the fundamental preparations for the air defence of Great Britain had been made—and this was proven by the outcome of the battle. Whatever the gallantry of the Royal Air Force pilots or the spirit of the British people, these would have been of no avail against the numbers and power of the Luftwaffe, if it had not been for the development between 1934 and 1940 of radar, radio control, the eight-gun fighter and the whole organisation of the air defences. No one, who knows anything of the fighting quality of the German, would suggest that spirit alone could have gained for the R.A.F. such a substantial victory against such overwhelming odds.

It is difficult to see why the revelation of the truth about the extent of the scientific and technical advantage that the R.A.F. undoubtedly had, should be regarded by Mr. Wintringham as detracting from the courage and achievement of the pilots and the people.

As for the title, to which Mr. Wintringham objects, we were naming a " broadcast," not re-naming a great event. We emphasised at the start that this was " the story of OPERATION SEALION . . . of Hitler's plan to invade this country . . . and of the frustration of that plan." In German eyes it was " The Battle *For* Britain," since the conquest or surrender of Britain would have set the seal on their victory. Hence our choice of title. LAURENCE GILLIAM

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JUDICIAL MURDER

SIR,—I find it strange to see such widespread indignation expressed at the execution of Mr. Petkov in Bulgaria while almost complete silence is maintained concerning the execution in Greece of nearly 500 former Resistance fighters since July of last year. I cannot help feeling that the difference lies in the fact that the Government of Greece is supported by British troops, whereas the execution of Mr. Petkov has been carried out by a Government of the Left.

At the present time the general secretary of E.A.M., Mr. Partsalides, is being tried for his life in Corinth. Can we hope that the British Government and the British Press will show at least the concern for this great Resistance fighter as they have shown for Mr. Petkov?

TH. DOGANIS,
London Correspondent of the E.A.M. Press

RUHR VALLEY AUTHORITY

SIR,—Professor Mitrany is quite right, of course, in describing the T.V.A. as "one of the big things of our time," and the African Groundnuts Scheme as "a brilliant idea expertly worked out," but he is surely quite wrong in suggesting that either of these is "Socialist." The latter involves the investment of some £24 millions of the British taxpayers' money over the next six years, for the development of 3,210,000 acres of land (of which a part, in Kenya, is "heavily populated"), which will ultimately give employment to 32,100 Africans and 750 Europeans. This is recommended to the British Government on the grounds that (a) it will mean "a saving of £10,000,000 per annum in Britain's food bill", (b) the residue of the nuts after extracting oil will make a valuable contribution towards "increasing milk production in the United Kingdom," though it is admitted that this could be used locally, if oil-expressing plant were established on the spot, for feeding cattle and "to meet the threat of famine in East Africa." At a later date, "which may be a generation or two ahead," this "Socialist" undertaking may be transferred to the African people to run "on some co-operative basis." The constructional and development work, accounting for over £19 millions of the capital expenditure, will presumably be done by the Construction Company, Limited, part of the United Africa Company, which belongs to Unilevers, and the marketing will presumably be done through the United Africa Company, the taxation of whose profits will go mainly to the British Exchequer.

I have ventured on the foregoing incomplete analysis of that "Socialist" scheme for the purpose of showing that there is a flaw in Professor Mitrany's remark that, unless capital help is linked to "a purely technical control," "only a trickle of the intended benefits would percolate to the mass of the people of those countries which receive it."

It must be clear, therefore, that the desirability of any functional scheme for regional co-operation, from the point of view of the peoples of the countries in which it will operate, will be determined by the outlook and aims of those who devise it, and later, of those who direct it. For this reason it would be interesting to know, and Professor Mitrany could doubtless inform us, how many of "the small group of experts from the East European governments" with which he concocted the study on "The Economic Development of South-Eastern Europe" are now helping their respective Governments in any capacity, and how many of them were at that time, or are now, in the employ of Unilevers.

If my correspondence on this topic has been based on "misinformation," I stand open to correction, but Professor Mitrany has not, I think, done this. If that alleged misinformation is "jaundiced" in relation to Unilevers, it might serve to correct this if Unilevers were to explain the following passage from the speech made by their Chairman, Mr. Geoffrey Heyworth, at their Annual General Meeting on September 8: "Much of the capital equipment of the oils and fats industries of Germany has been destroyed. We have seen that it will be a considerable time before the pre-war productive capacity of these industries elsewhere in Western Europe is going to be fully employed. Some way must, therefore, be found so that before any re-equipment takes place in Germany, and indeed in other countries, these existing facilities are first brought into full use. Unless immediate action is taken it will be too late, for already a start has been made in Germany, where factories are being rebuilt and new ones erected which cannot be justified for many years to come." It would be interesting to know, and Unilevers could doubtless inform us, the ownership of the factories, both the old and the new, in Germany, by whose decision they are being rebuilt or built, and who is providing the capital and machinery.

EDGAR P. YOUNG

FARMER JOAD

SIR,—Dr. Joad dwells on the "'cagey' uncommunicativeness of farmers" in the way of giving information about farming to a newcomer. He says they look down their contemptuously surprised noses when they find he doesn't know all about the processes of farming; and that they proceed on the assumption that only a congenital idiot would *not* know what is a down-calving heifer, etc.

Well, can Dr. Joad wonder at any farmer's incredulous surprise or indeed utter amazement at finding a man starting farming on his own account without even knowing these exceedingly elementary matters.

After all, down-calving heifers and 4-year leys are as commonplace things to farmers as, say, a fountain pen or paper-clips are to Dr. Joad.

The few "brusque words of incomprehensible technicality" which Dr. Joad has to "drag out" of farmers are simply the poor embarrassed men's attempts to explain the obvious—like being asked to teach a famous and particularly articulate man to spell CAT or to add 2 and 2 together.

These incomprehensible technicalities are probably such obvious and simple things to a real farmer that he has difficulty in finding other terms for them for the enlightenment of other people. This trait is surely common to most callings and calls for no special comment in respect of farmers.

Dr. Joad gives an elaborate explanation of why he finds it difficult to get information from farmers. This explanation is quite wrong. To suggest that information is deliberately withheld, and for the reasons given, is I am sure utterly mistaken. For one reason, farmers simply are not such curmudgeons, generally speaking; besides, they like talking shop too much.

Dr. Joad's example of the men lifting sacks is not a good one. The knack of hoisting a bag of corn, say, or fertiliser, on to the shoulders is not one which can be learnt by "tips." The only way of acquiring the knack is by practice.

But *of course* the others winked at the beginner's ignorance. Don't *all* experts wink at amateurs' feeble first attempts?

As to money-worries, may one simply comment that many people without experience think it is easy to make farming pay. When they actually have a try they are nearly always disillusioned very soon. Dr. Joad apparently in about a year.

If he wants any advice about farming probably the best that he could be given is to get out before he loses a packet of money.

R. L. LEWIS

ROTHENBURG

SIR,—Mr. Roger Marvell, in his review of "Lost Treasures of Europe" grieves because he learnt from it of several disasters of which he "was unaware, notably the wrecking of Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauben, a town unrivalled in its Dürer picturesqueness." I am happy to say that I visited Rothenburg in the summer of 1946, and found it undamaged except for a small area on the outskirts of the town. If Mr. Marvell looks closely at the horrible photograph of a shattered city which is presented as Rothenburg-ob-der-Tauben in "The Lost Treasures of Europe" he will see that its ground-plan shows it to be some other city.

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BOOKS IN GENERAL

"I have just finished . . . a fine flight . . . into the higher fantastic, which has rather depleted me, or at any rate, affected me a discharging my obligations in that quarter." Thus Henry James in a letter to W. D. Howells, written after completing *The Sacred Fount*, in August, 1900.

The remark serves to remind us that throughout his career (from *The Last of the Valerii* and earlier, up to *The Sense of the Past*) James considered himself as under "obligations" to fantasy. In cases other than this he is thought to have displayed a peculiarly happy hand; but I have yet to come across a critic of James's work who has a good word to say for *The Sacred Fount*. Indeed, it is considered unreadable even by amateurs of the master's last phase, many of whom affect not to understand what the book is about. Put briefly, then, the theme is that of two people, one of whom, in any relation of intimacy, battens upon the other's vitality. In an image which should spring as naturally to our own minds as it did to James's, the relationship is likened to that of a blood transfusion. Surely there is nothing very obscure or esoteric in this situation: life-givers and spiritual vampires are a frequent subject of comment in all circles at all times.

In *The Sacred Fount* the process is displayed as in one case adulterous, since two of the four people involved are married out of this relationship, which is the reason why they are driven to seek it. The turn which James habitually gave to any screw that came to hand here involves an at least two-fold character for the sought supply: in the case of Gilbert Long it is mental liveliness which gushes from the sacred fount, in that of Mrs. Brissenden a rebate of physical vitality. I take this distinction to be sufficiently clear from the moment at which James himself (the novel is told in the first person) chooses to reveal his characters. Mr. Edmund Wilson, from his position of dead-pan hostility to the whole book, concludes that what causes the apparent change in the balance of the couples is, simply, love. This view seems to confuse the means with the end: whether or not a sexual relation is involved (and James leaves this in doubt) some degree or kind of "love" is clearly essential, for without it the tie would be too weak to operate the mysterious transfusion. For mysterious it is, however recognisable; and the hiding-place of the sacred fount is at least as much the object of James's detective investigation as the various results of its flow. This dubiety, of which Mrs. Brissenden, in the final scene of the book, makes full use, in order to cover her own tracks and cast ridicule on the detective's work, is the chief cause of the generally ambiguous atmosphere of which Mr. Wilson complains. But it is a cardinal error to assume that, because it was in the characters' interest to obscure the issue as much as possible, therefore James himself did not really know what it was. It was indeed his habit, in the later novels, to confess his intention explicitly on an early page; and in *The Sacred Fount* he is careful to expose, in plain terms, the position of his chief characters with regard to one another:

> Gilbert Long might die, but not the intensity he had inspired. The analogy with the situation of the Brissendens here, I further considered, broke down; I, at any rate, rather positively welcomed the view that the sacrificed party to *that* union might really find the arrest of his decline, if not the renewal of his youth, in the loss of his wife. Would this lady indeed, as an effect of *his* death, begin to wrinkle and shrivel? It would sound brutal to say that this was what I should have preferred to hold, were it not that I, in fact, felt forced to recognise the slightness of such a chance. She would have loved his youth, and have made it her own, in death as in life, and he would have quitted the world, in truth, only the more effectually to leave it to her. Mrs. Server's quandary—which was now all I cared for—was exactly in her own certitude of every absence of issue.

Since this is a detective story, the essential criminality of the beneficiaries is established at an even earlier point in the story. "The agents of the sacrifice are uncomfortable, I gather," says the narrator, "if they suspect or fear that you see." And James makes sure that Gilbert Long and Mrs. Brissenden come to seem more and more baleful to us, as Charlotte Stant and the Prince do in *The Golden Bowl*. After two days' proximity with Henry James, Mrs. Brissenden realises that he is not to be put off the scent, and it is then that she makes her final—and successful—bid to escape conviction. This she does by convincing him that the suppositious process has existed entirely in his sense of it, a contention which does not in the least impair the beauty of the drama.

Such then, in this particular case, is H. G. Wells's "eggshell, dead kitten, and piece of string." From the pooh-pooh standpoint, of course, the plot of *The Sacred Fount* will certainly appear tenuous and unreal—but not more so, surely, than *Pelléas et Mélisande* or one of James's own most admired stories—*The Beast in the Jungle*, say, or *The Altar of the Dead*. At the same time, I know that, in sustaining the view that *The Sacred Fount* is one of James's most remarkable and characteristic performances, I am up against his own decision to exclude it from the collected edition of his works. Exactly how much of actual dislike that decision implied cannot now be decided, since James seems to have remained unusually taciturn on the subject; merely mentioning the exclusion, without comment, in his preface to the *Daisy Miller* volume. Further evidence may easily come to light; but for the time being we are entitled to feel astonished at the capriciousness that rejected this novel but remained satisfied with a story like *Maud-Evelyn*, of which the *donnée* is considerably more far-fetched and in general terms less "rich" than that of *The Sacred Fount*.

To turn now from the theme to its treatment is immediately, I feel, to leave debatable ground behind us: as an artistic *tour de force* the book is extraordinarily perfect. By the time he came to write it Henry James had digested, with great fortitude, the bitter lesson of his disastrous venture into the theatre. This meant realising that, although his imagination was in the deepest sense a dramatic one, the tempo of his invention was not well adapted to the stage. His solution—a bold one—was a series of novels which possess all the advantages of theatrical construction as well as the discursive qualities of 19th century fiction. I can name only one other author who attempted this fusion successfully: George Meredith; but even *The Egoist*, much as it owes to the example of Molière, does not attempt the daring symmetry, the absolutely consistent atmosphere, and the resolute values, of *The Sacred Fount*. For in this book James hedged himself in with more restrictions on freedom of movement, action and scene, than in any other of his large canvases. The classical unities are strictly observed: if we exclude the brief prologue, during the train journey from London to Newmarch, the action plays itself out in under 24 hours (allowing for sleep); within the confines of a mansion and its surrounding park; and without the slightest deviation from the single theme. This severe programme imposes as much strain upon the reader's attention as it seems to have imposed upon James's technical ingenuity. Those who find the price too high cannot be proved unreasonable; but (as Sainte-Beuve remarked, in denigration of Balzac's *Le Lys dans la Vallée*) "on n'improvise pas toute une atmosphère morale," and it can, I think, be agreed that the moral atmosphere in which James was involved by his subject demanded the narrow intensity of classical drama.

Henry James's sense of drama was inextricably bound up with his sense of evil as a positive force, so that he was bound to unfold his story in terms of the waxing and waning of that unstable power in Long and Mrs. Brissenden. But since it was part of his genius to be incapable of neglecting *any* facet of a situation, the action of the novel also involves glimpses of the "victims," Guy Brissenden and Mrs. Server, who are represented as huddling together for mutual comfort in their state of dilapidation.

This quadrangular intrigue (there are, of course, the usual subsidiary confidants) is simple enough in outline, but very highly organised in a series of "set" scenes which mount steadily, like a grand staircase, up to the final climax of the detective's discomfiture at the hands of Mrs. Brissenden. True to his dramatic scheme, James keeps the dialogue strictly relevant to the situation—a procedure which necessarily limits the number of scenes, but at the same time gives him his opportunity for a decor of the utmost splendour. He had described English country houses before, and was to do so again; but in creating Newmarch he did the stately home prouder than it has, I think, ever been done, outside the novels of Disraeli. The portrait is in no sense "built up," for the detail is too sparing for that; but the suggestion of fleets of Palladian rooms, opening out of each other and (through French windows) on to wide scapes of lawn and terrace; the sense of space and of an eternity of still summer trees basking in a hush of unclouded sunlight; the taste of civilised ripeness, as of a pear just before it turns woolly; the aptness with which each phase of the drama is lit by the appropriate hour—rising quickly to the sultry grandeur of noon, then dipping more slowly towards night, so that, scene by scene, the human figures throw longer and longer shadows upon the grass: all these calculated features, laid into the background of our consciousness, leave us with the impression—brilliant as a canvas by Monet—of those "accumulations of expression" in which for James the fascination of a great country house consisted. Because of the mysterious nature of the intrigue the characters move in an ambience of magic—of a world where the mere process of living is taken for granted and occurs out of sight. Even the host and hostess play no overt part: we never see them, never even learn their names: they are the invisible genii who evoke the setting in which the spring is to flow, suspected but unhindered.

The narrator of *The Sacred Fount* has been taken to task, in some quarters, for the indiscretion he shows in failing to mind what these critics conceive to be his own business. So extreme an interest in other people's private affairs is felt as ill-bred. This is a typically Anglo-Saxon criticism, which would seem futile in a Latin country—or indeed any in which the habit of psychological discussion is considered natural, and the reality of amorous intrigue (in one form or another) taken for granted. Furthermore, what is a novelist's business, if it is not just that detective interest which stops short at *no* stage of analysis? True, the narrator of the novel is not explicitly identified with James himself. Yet whom else could he conceivably be meant to represent? As a revelation of the novelist's reaction to the raw material of his art the book is peculiarly interesting (this point has been noted before), and perhaps it is not very surprising that people should be dismayed by the possibility of themselves providing material of this kind. But, as moths devour wool, so novelists devour people, and James follows Stendhal in valuing the social occasion (here a large week-end party) for its power to heighten the awareness, to sharpen the wits and competitive instincts, of the personalities he wishes to observe. "Try to be one of the people upon whom nothing is lost," wrote Henry James to a young aspirant: advice that came naturally from one who so clearly belonged to those "minds for which the vision of life is an obsession." By "life" is to be understood above all the mind in action, struggling to conceal—and yet preserve—emotion below the unbroken urbanity of the social surface. This contest (it is the ground-bass of James's whole *œuvre*) is the distinguishing mark of civilisation, in the sphere of human relationships. Seen as a profound inquiry into the cost of these tensions, *The Sacred Fount* appears a supreme exercise in the spirit of poetic analysis.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

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American Speeches. By the EARL OF HALIFAX. *O.U.P.* 21*s.*

Mr. Eden is one of the most accomplished speakers in Parliament today. His manner at the dispatch box is a nice blend of self-confidence and modesty and he has that mysterious quality of seeming to stand "above party" which is often mistaken for statesmanship at Westminster.

On the public platform he is not so successful. His Parliamentary brand of humour seems insipid in a big hall and when he aspires to oratory he too often falls into platitude. Though people crowd to hear him, they can rarely recollect anything that he has said. Reading *Freedom and Order*, the text of all his big speeches through six dramatic years, one gets the impression that Mr. Eden always managed to say neither more nor less than the conscientious reader of *The Times* would have said, if he were equally practised in public speaking. It is not simply that the choice of words is conventional: the argument lacks punch. Mr. Eden uses words not to stimulate the intellect but to lull it into inactivity:

> No one can suppose that the economic reorganisation of Europe after victory will be an easy task. But we shall not shirk our opportunity and our responsibility to bear our share of the burdens. The peaceful brotherhood of nations, with new liberty to each to develop its own balanced economic life and its characteristic culture, will be the common object. But it is the transition to this end which presents the problem. It is the establishment of an international economic system, capable of translating the technical possibilities of production into actual plenty, and maintaining the whole population in a continuous fruitful activity, which is difficult.

The *thoughtlessness*—in the literal sense of the word—of this passage pervades every speech. If the sentences are carefully analysed, they will be found to express not principles but pious aspirations. His philosophy—and this explains his popularity—consists in wish-fulfilment. The basic principle of British policy, he repeats, must be the interdependence of the Great Powers and their co-operation. In this way freedom will be reconciled with order. But suppose the Great Powers will not co-operate? Suppose there are conflicting interpretations of how freedom shall be reconciled with order? Mr. Eden recoils with distaste:

> What matters in foreign affairs is not the form of internal government of any nation, but its international behaviour. The trouble with Hitler for instance was not that he was a Nazi at home. The trouble with him was that he would not stay at home . . . Contrast this with Russia's attitude and our own.

This sort of good-natured blindness is surprising in a Conservative. In the past Conservative leaders have shown a keen grasp of the power factors in foreign policy. Mr. Eden is strangely defective in this Tory realism. Discarding the wisdom of the Serpent, he is still fumbling for a substitute. He never seems to have studied objectively either the strength of Britain in the post-war world or the forces which mould American and Russian policy. A natural diplomat, he sees politics exclusively in terms of politicians and he tends to forget that agreement cannot be an end in itself. He was right in his determination to seek co-operation with Russia, and in his denunciation of the anti-Bolsheviks for playing Hitler's game. But his hopefulness was far greater than his intellectual courage. Unwilling to face facts, however unpleasant, he could not transform mere aspirations into an act of will. That is why he remains that peculiarly British type, the idealist without convictions.

To turn to Lord Halifax's American speeches is to experience a sense of surprised exhilaration. Whatever their effectiveness on the platform, they read well. Here is someone with a sense of style, who deliberately selects his words and puts them in an order which he deems to be good. Simply as a record of the war years, these speeches make excellent reading. But they are a great deal better than a chronicle: they are a confession of faith. That is why, although everything was against him when he arrived in America, Lord Halifax became a resounding success as our wartime Ambassador. Americans do not like a "smoothy" who thinks he knows how to humour them. They have a weakness for men with clearcut personalities and definite views. Lord Halifax is a man of this sort, and his deep religious convictions gave him an immediate point of contact with the vast majority of average men and women in the States. He won their respect because he spoke to them not as a diplomatist but as a Christian Peer. Unashamedly in churches and chapels, at banquets and at public meetings, he advocated Anglo-American unity as the unity of Christian peoples against Totalitarianism. His faith in this respect was the American faith, and, when Hitler fell and Communist Russia became the new enemy, Lord Halifax's Christian crusade became even more popular.

I happen to disagree with the philosophy which pervades these speeches. But at least there is something to disagree with, whereas *Freedom and Order* is so broad-minded that it ends by saying nothing at all. Mr. Eden floats rudderless under a flapping sail of good intentions. Lord Halifax steers a casuistic course through the flux of politics to the far-seen goal. His whole life and intellect permeated by Tory principle and Anglican theology, rigid on fundamentals and flexible in action, he was Mr. Churchill's perfect representative in America. Patiently and conscientiously he prepared the ground for the Fulton doctrine and for the political conditions of the American loan.

> It is scarcely possible as yet to foresee how the two conflicting systems of foreign trade, which even before the war sharply divided the totalitarian countries from the rest of the trading world, will be finally resolved. We can only feel sure that it will not be resolved in favour of totalitarianism . . . Reconstruction of the shattered fabric of world trade must be planned and undertaken in co-operation by the United States and the nations of the British Commonwealth with the help, as we hope, of other free nations.

It is indeed a genuine tribute to Lord Halifax's sincerity to observe that it was a strange thing for a Labour Government to retain him as Ambassador. Here was a high Tory who could represent nothing but Tory principles, a churchman who had never attempted to conceal his detestation not only of Communist Russia but of all socialist economics. No wonder, when he stayed on in Washington, Americans assumed that Mr. Churchill was still in charge of British foreign policy.

I recommend these speeches for careful reading. They are an eloquent and sustained exposition of the Tory way of life and in particular of the enlightened Tory view of the Commonwealth. They range far beyond current politics and include an unforgettable essay on Abraham Lincoln.

> Thus gradually for his own countrymen, as for the larger world outside, from these elements of form and colour, light and shade, the picture of Lincoln as a whole was drawn and became familiar. A tall, shy, somewhat awkward man, now gloomily silent, now boisterous in fun; observant, deep, slow, diffident of his strength and painfully aware of his limitations yet; gradually, as he felt his way from one stepping-stone of conscience to the next, steeling and sharpening his mind to master the great issues that beset his country until he saw plainly what it was that needed doing.

In contrasting Lord Halifax's prose with the prosiness of *Freedom and Order* it is only fair to recall that in the supreme test of the 1930's Mr. Eden's generous instincts drove him to resign rather than remain an accomplice of appeasement whereas Lord Halifax stayed in the Cabinet to carry out Mr. Chamberlain's policy. His record as an uncompromising appeaser, sacrificing one small nation after another to his Christian purpose, reminds us that religious rectitude and intellectual conviction can confirm a politician in a bad policy as well as in a good one. Lord Halifax has some of the spiritual ruthlessness of the meek who know God.

R. H. S. CROSSMAN

BIRDS AND ISLANDS

Letters from Skokholm. By R. M. LOCKLEY. *Dent.* 16*s.*

Off the western tip of the Pembrokeshire coast lie the two islands of Skokholm and Skomer. Like most lonely islands, they are full of noises. But in certain weeks of May and June, round about midnight (Double Summer Time), the air is packed with sounds as fantastic as any heard by man. This muffled uproar (those who have heard it once can always hear it again at will, in imagination) is the effect of hundreds of manx shearwaters returning to their nests, and uttering, as they search for the entrance to their burrows, their dismayed, anxious, or sociable cries. The general hubbub is weird but peaceful, like the sounds from a distant shunting yard. It contains, in fact, many of the squeaks and groans and cymbal-clashings of trucks shunting, with the quiver and gong of a light engine in the background. But though the rhythm is mechanical, it suggests a machine made of flesh and bones: the harshness is muted.

The causes of this nightly landing have been described in exact detail by R. M. Lockley in his book on the shearwater. These islands were his principal field of research. But we can see for ourselves why the birds prefer to land in the dark. By the light of our electric torches the shearwater, brilliant virtuoso of flight, is revealed as a pathetic fumbler on land, dragging along on its stomach. To ring the bird, we have only to stoop, pick it up, and hold it in one hand, extraordinarily small and vulnerable for a creature which can live at ease in mid-Atlantic.

In the daytime there is plenty of evidence of the fate which will befall the shearwater if it lands too soon. More daring and more vindictive than the eagle, and looking almost as large, planted squarely on one of its favourite cliff pinnacles, is the greater black-backed gull. The soft red campions and the sea campions and the bluebells of the island are the graveyard of a thousand shearwaters whose everted bodies we see, like small garments turned horribly inside out, as if the gull had thrust its great claw of a beak down the shearwater's throat, and pulled out its entrails through the gullet.

In his new book, Mr. R. M. Lockley gives us many new notes on his islands. There are no new shearwater studies. But there are observations of the big gull:

> It will persecute a colony of guillemots on an exposed ledge and take all the chicks by degrees, making a breakfast of one or two each day. . . . These small chicks are swallowed whole, and often still alive.

There are notes on geology and climate in this phenological record. There are records of plants, and the spring squill which grows where the grass is shorter. A chapter on the Atlantic seal calf which, although it is capable of swimming at birth, prefers to spend its earliest days inland; and, of course, notes on the puffins which stand in military rows, so fixed that you can almost, but not quite, catch them before they take off, shakily, for the sea, on a line of flight which wobbles on its axis like those little wooden boxes on their catapult journeys along the wire from the counter to the cash desk in the haberdashers' shops of ancient times.

An interesting point of style may be mentioned. The publishers of this book speak of its "rich prose." Mr. Lockley is an all-round naturalist who also specialises. Naturally, therefore, his prose is packed with observation. But rich in the sense of richly decorated it is not; and to suggest the contrary is to do the book a disservice. The "beautiful rich prose department" of natural history writing is shunned like the plague by most modern readers, who know that it takes

a Thoreau to mix the factual style with the imagination.

Lockley, of course, has come under the spell of Thoreau himself, and his writing in some of his other books is not always unaffected by the dangers of this association. His work sometimes presents us with the curious spectacle of a man acting the part, as it were, of the character which is in fact his own—the devotee of nature. Even in this book the device of presenting it as a series of letters beginning "My dear J" seems rather irritating and artificial. But for the most part *Letters From Skokholm* is a good book, and good natural history. STEPHEN POTTER

A TEXTBOOK OF PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

'The Personality of Man.' By G. M. TYRRELL. *Pelican Books.* 1s.

The task which, in this recently published Pelican, Doctor Tyrrell has set himself, is that of gathering together all the evidence available from *all* sources, relative to the nature of human personality and its position and status in the universe. As he himself puts it, "we want to know what the *whole* body of human experience signifies and what it entitles us to believe. . ." His demand is for "a bird's-eye view of human nature" and not the "host of worms-eye views of its parts" that the sciences give. But since both science and psychology have combined to ignore those aspects of human experience known as "paranormal," it is upon these that Mr. Tyrrell has for many years chosen more particularly to direct his attention. In 1923 he decided to devote himself wholly to their investigation. His *Science and Psychical Phenomena*, published in the late thirties, is recognised as a classic, and in 1938 he became President of the Society of Psychical Research. He is thus well-fitted to carry out the task he has set himself. His knowledge of the subject is immense. Besides conducting experiments himself, he seems to have read most of its voluminous literature over the last fifty years. He writes well and tells many of the first-rate stories with which the subject abounds like a good after-dinner raconteur—taken simply as fiction, the story of Patience Worth, for example, puts ninety-nine short stories out of every hundred hopelessly out of court! He appends a useful glossary of terms; his survey of the various theories and hypotheses that have been put forward is comprehensive, and his discussions of them sensible. When he suggests his own conclusions, he does so tentatively and always gives good grounds for the view he takes.

When one takes a general survey of the phenomena described, what chiefly strikes one is a variety which ranges from clairvoyance to telepathy and to the recent sensational developments of pre-cognitive telepathy, from ghosts and apparitions to poltergeists, from the unexplained movements of small objects in the seance room to the materialisation of so-called "spirit forms" out of ectoplasm, from multiple and split personalities to the planchette and the ouija boards, and from automatic writing to the fascinating data provided by cross-correspondence. All these must involve frequent reference to related phenomena on the confines of this muddled and crowded territory, such as mysticism and the hypnotic state, and must also touch on the various theories, ranging from that of the subliminal self to that of the discarnate surviving spirit, which have been put forward to explain them.

Of the various theories, that of the subliminal self covers, Dr. Tyrrell thinks, most of the ground; it is certainly the most plausible. The theory postulates the existence and activity of what Dr. Tyrrell calls "a region of the human personality lying behind consciousness, hidden from view." Now much more is here asserted than is involved in the conception of our simple old sexual friend, the Freudian Unconscious, the "more" suggesting in certain respects the fount of inspiration from which genius takes its rise. So close, indeed, is the resemblance here, that Mr. Tyrrell puts forward the interesting view that the difference between the genius and the genuine automatist (writer of automatic scripts), is that while in each case there is unconscious inspiration, the genius possesses the conscious faculties which will enable him to clothe the inspirational material with "superlative expression."

Two features of the subliminal self call for special attention. First, it is hard to resist the conclusion that it exists either outside time, as we know it, or at least in a different kind of time. How else explain the facts that, as in Dr. Soal's experiments, it sometimes seems to be aware of events that have not yet, in any ordinary sense of the word "time," occurred, and that it appears to possess the power of being directly aware of events in the remote past of which it could not have had knowledge by any normal means?

Secondly, the clear-cut division between different personalities seems to break down below the threshold. For example, in the case of joint hallucinations, it sometimes seems as if some common subliminal impulse caused percipients to have experiences of objects which, in common parlance, would be said to be "not there." Moreover, the writings of automatists often resemble one another much more closely, both in regard to matter and style, than the emanations of the conscious personalities of the writers. (One is reminded of Kant's rather disquieting suggestion that the transcendental self is the same in all of us.) But resemblances are constantly cropping up in this sphere. What, for example, is the significance of the strong resemblance that runs between poltergeist phenomena in all times and places?

I have deliberately confined this discussion to what I have called "the most plausible" of the various theories, but it is impossible to study the evidence collected by psychical research with what one hopes is an unbiassed mind, and to hold that a theory based upon the oddness and the richness of the living human personality covers all the ground. For example, the view that the predictions of Patience Worth, or that the inspiration of the Verrall-Willett cross-correspondence *do not* point to the existence of discarnate entities, involves such astonishingly complicated assumptions about the nature of the human being that, as Mr. Tyrrell points out, "as alternative to the discarnate theory, it is scarcely a less marvellous alternative." Similarly, if the whole of Mrs. Willett's astonishing performances are to be ascribed to a "piece of playacting on the part of some fragment of Mrs. Willett's personality, it discloses a quintessence of dramatic skill which strikes one dumb with amazement."

This is not the place for a discussion of this vexed question. I can record only my own impression which, I think, is that of most of those who have concerned themselves with the subject: the impression of, to put it at its lowest, some force or agency at play, which is at once beyond the reach of ordinary control and the skill of the most ingenious conjurer.

I don't think that the oddness of the phenomena is in itself a reason for doubting their genuineness. I suppose that if the universe is infinite, it can well be infinitely queer, which means among other things, queer in an infinite number of different ways. Only to our own age, I suggest, could it seem an implausible and reactionary view,

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that the familiar world with its concepts of space, time, matter and causality may be only a department of reality or perhaps even a veil through which we can sometimes glimpse a reality of a different order. C. E. M. JOAD

VADE MECUM

The Intelligent Man's Guide to the Post-War World. By G. D. H. COLE. *Gollancz.* 21*s.*

I can think of no one else with the courage or capacity to have written this book. In something over a thousand pages, Professor Cole has written a lucid, simple and yet highly expert account of the world's economic and political muddles. Complete with admirably selected charts and tables, he deals with the basic economic facts; he discusses the conflict of ideologies, the notion of liberty as understood in the West and the question how far it can be ensured by constitutional guarantees and whether it can survive under a socialist economic system; he analyses the problem of booms and slumps and unemployment, and manages to give a remarkably full account of the internal problems of Britain and the limitations of our present effort to plan our economic system. The whole of this ambitious and comprehensive argument is conducted in a spirit of moderation and the conclusions are marked by common sense and informed by experience.

In his last sections Mr. Cole discusses our desperate international problems with candour and realism. One of the problems of such an encyclopaedic task has clearly been that events change so fast that Mr. Cole has found one part of the book getting out of date even while he was revising another. After much rewriting, he decided to make his deadline the end of March 1947. He probably chose well. It was already clear by March that the Allies were not going to reach agreement about a united Europe, and that for the time being at least the Soviet Union and the Capitalist West had decided against any genuine collaboration. As a result, Mr. Cole's book is, generally speaking, surprisingly up to date. It is written "with a moral". Mr. Cole is not one of those experts who hopes to gain authority by refusing to express personal opinions. He says he has never seen any reason why the teacher should hide part of his mind from his pupils. He writes throughout as a Social Democrat, greatly influenced by Marx in his interpretation of events, but maintaining the importance of achieving Socialism by means compatible with the survival of democracy. He concludes with a discussion of the "moral values" of civilisation. He would do everything possible to collaborate with the Soviet Union, but argues that we must not allow the fact that we shall be accused of plotting against the U.S.S.R. to prevent us setting out in partnership "with everyone in Europe who is prepared to help, to bring back the tradition of Western civilisation as a practical force in world affairs. . . . If we wish to uphold certain moral values . . . let us at all costs behave as if we believed in these values and not merely jabber about them.

The most remarkable fact about this book is that it is what its title promises. It is an ideal text book for any discussion or adult education group; it contains in summary form economic information and argument that will be full of interest to any informed reader, and it is the heaven-sent reply to the type of letter which often reaches me from honest inquirers who ask me, please, to explain in simple language what is the difference between Socialism, Communism and the various other "isms" they read about in the newspapers. TOM PAINE.

SOUL AND SOIL

Richard Jefferies. Selections ed. by HENRY WILLIAMSON. *Faber.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

A Classic of English Farming: Hodge and His Masters. By RICHARD JEFFERIES, ed. by HENRY WILLIAMSON. *Faber.* 10*s.* 6*d.*

The Natural History of Selborne. By GILBERT WHITE, ed. JAMES FISHER. *Cresset Press.* 8*s.* 6*d.*

With his centenary approaching, Jefferies is ripe for revaluation. Mr. Williamson, his life-long champion and at first sight the obvious person to write such a book, disclaims the intention. "Dear Jefferies," he concludes these selections, "I could not write a book about you, a prophet whose testimony and fate is everywhere in your own works." Perhaps it is as well. What Jefferies needs now is not advocacy of the embarrassing type with which his editor sprinkles these pages, and which causes him to illuminate a passage thus:

> . . . a sentence which might have come from the autobiography of Adolf Hitler. (In this connection, literary criticism of a future age will discover many similarities in these two men. Both grew up solitaries, unaffected by schooling, learning only from the natural intuitional self. I am sure that such natural genius or power should be used only in the creation of art: never applied DIRECTLY to the actions of ordinary men. Yet both Hitler and Jefferies were prophets crying, and perishing, in the industrial wilderness of the gold-god civilisation.)

We may share Mr. Williamson's regret that Hitler preferred to apply power rather than paint.

True, Jefferies cried out against the "gold-god civilisation": so, in their several ways, did Marx and Morris and the other major prophets of the century. True, his own morbid condition caused him (like Lawrence) to exalt physical perfection, and produce lyrical passages which would have made *Strength through Joy* propaganda—but these could be quoted just as well by the nudists, of whom the Nazis disapproved.

Jefferies' deficient historical knowledge—and historical imagination—permitted him an excessive regard for Julius Caesar and for the discipline of Sparta, which fitted "exactly to my ideas." He seemed to forget that it was not Sparta that produced the statues which so deeply moved him; and that when he waxed romantic over ancient virility, "the hunter eagerly pursuing" and "the whirl of joy in the warriors from Marathon," those warriors were the citizens of the Athenian democracy.

The unevenness of Jefferies' prose has been noted too often to need fresh comment, except to say that Mr. Williamson's chronological arrangement shows to what extent it developed—and in some ways failed to develop. Unfortunately, some of the same carelessness has now infected the once well-wrought prose of his editor. "Face up to," "When written, he was a happier man," and "When originally I first read . . ." come within seven consecutive lines; and surely the author of *The Pathway* can secure emphasis without shouting in block capitals?

Too many readers know Jefferies only through *Bevis* and *The Story of My Heart*. Mr. Williamson reminds us of his skill as a reporter. *Hodge and His Masters* shows the unmystical, almost objective, Jefferies at his best, and it begins to acquire historical value as a picture of society in mid-Victorian Wiltshire. Truthful reporting is often no more welcome than prophecy; it is small wonder that he lacked honour in Swindon and was known as Loony Dick. A young man who wrote that "there is scarcely room for further improvement in the cottages now erected upon estates" could hardly expect to be popular with "the agricultural men, who are immoral without exception"—even though he sub-

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stantiated the second remark by quoting the clergyman's wife who "offered a reward of a piece of furniture to the first married woman who does not bear a child till nine months after marriage." Later, of course, in *The Dewy Morn*, his class-sympathies had shifted, but this fact is not brought out in either of the books Mr. Williamson has edited.

"His mind was free and his eye open," Jefferies wrote approvingly when, in his turn, he wrote a preface to White's *Selborne*. It has been customary, points out Mr. Fisher introducing this latest edition of White, to regard him as the fountain-head of a tradition transmitted through Jefferies to Hudson; whereas actually the calm eighteenth-century cleric had little in common with "the emotional, romantic outpourings" of Jefferies, and should more truly be regarded as the first of the field-observers, precursor to Montagu and MacGillivray. This edition has a number of ambitious wood engravings by Claire Oldham, some of which deserve printing on a less transparent paper.

GEOFFREY TREASE

MARX AMONG THE MUSES?

English Chamber Music. By ERNST H. MEYER. *Lawrence and Wishart.* 30*s.*

Here is the first independent study of the neglected field of English instrumental chamber music between Henry VIII and Purcell, pioneered by that uncompromising genius, Arnold Dolmetsch, who mastered the music, recovered its instruments, and left a small contingent of progeny and pupils to leaven the vast majority still unacquainted with the singular beauty of its best specimens when properly performed.

In a telescopic prologue, rather more stress than the facts can bear is laid on the opposition of many medieval ecclesiastics to the long-established use of instruments in Church. This prepares us for the statement that "during the 14th century," when itinerant minstrels became a public nuisance, "the true nature of medieval instrumental music as part of the struggle of the lower classes for individual freedom and secular society begins to be obvious." And though the amazing vitality of early Tudor England is correctly described as an essentially bourgeois vitality, Dr. Meyer is so persuaded of the pre-eminence of "the popular forces" in moulding our musical future that he cites one of the beautiful but sombre titleless viol pieces of Henry VIII himself as an instance of folk influence, under the tendentious title of "Dance Tune," he assures us in question-begging terms that "the young bourgeoisie whose interests were so largely represented by Henry VIII wanted this simple and jolly music and took it over, having no use for the highly architectonic contrapuntal combinations of the learned scholars in the cloisters."

On the next page we read that "instrumental expression is struggling to be born." What do we really know of medieval or classical (not to mention ancient oriental) instrumental usages to justify so confident a statement? Dr. Meyer has himself just named, without describing, a Jacobean MS preserving a Welsh bardic tradition of startling two-handed harmony for the harp, too archaic to be a forgery, and unmistakably originating before "the artist's imagination was freed from its medieval fetters" and "historical necessity brought about the evolution of chamber music and chamber music instruments."

Beneath these dialectical preoccupations and the misstatements of fact into which they keep beguiling him, Dr. Meyer has many true and important things to say. It is both true and important that Tudor economic and social changes placed unprecedented leisure at the disposal of a bourgeois upper and middle class more civilised than the medieval baronage and more secular than the medieval clerics. The amateur chamber music evolved to meet their needs is remarkable enough without making the claim that it is the earliest chamber music written. The bulk of it, written for the family of viols, is here correctly derived from the ecclesiastical motet (which cannot, then, have been so very unpopular) enlivened by rather less dance influence and, at the turn of the 16th and 17th centuries, by rather more of the richly harmonic Italian influence than Dr. Meyer allows. Thereafter, like our Jacobean madrigals (which it outlived by several decades) this music embarked on a peculiarly English (and a thoroughly instrumental) phase, producing among a mass of inferior matter those few score masterpieces of intimate polyphony by which the school will live again.

As a first guide to these unfamiliar treasures, Dr. Meyer's book, with its careful analysis of structure and its liberal selection of musical examples, is very welcome. Believing, as he does, that "there is nothing to be said against the performance upon modern violins, violas and 'cellos of old music intended for viols," Dr. Meyer has not, it is true, found his way to those most inward and characteristic of all viol fantasies which will not yield even a part of their secrets on other instruments; and the majority of his examples would not have been my own first choices. Even so, there is plenty to induce the reader to look further for himself, which is Dr. Meyer's own avowed and creditable aim.

ROBERT DONINGTON

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Perhaps Dr. Horkheimer is more explicit in his criticism of various contemporary cultural trends than in expounding his own socio-philosophical attitude. Here he remains unfortunately too sketchy and also too programmatic. Yet his criticisms are pertinent and without compromise, whether they are directed at the value of public opinion polls or are exploring the relation between men and nature in the era of formalised reason—of which the following question which an American boy put to his father may be taken as a significant allegory: "Daddy, what is the moon supposed to advertise?"

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BLACKWELL

Week-end Competitions

No. 919

Set by Sebastian

The usual prizes are offered for sixteen lines of verse bidding farewell to the Continent in the manner and metre of *Don Juan*. Entries by October 14th.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 916

Set by Thomas Anthony

In the interval at the Covent Garden Ballet, my wife added greatly to the evening by finding a lady reading a French paper with the headline :—

PRENEZ GARDE AUX FAUX BOY-SCOUTS ET MÉFIEZ-VOUS DES POÈTES INCONNUS.

A prize of six guineas is offered for an account in Voltairean French prose of how Candide ignored these obvious dangers, and of the deplorable results. (Maximum 200 words.)

Report by Thomas Anthony

Some deemed the task impossible for an Englishman, and the first screening certainly left a very short list. The rejects included some remarkably weird efforts ; or perhaps hair-raising would better describe the young poet with " les cheveux mal dressés." Nevertheless a lapse or two in grammar or *tournure* couldn't be allowed to spoil the fun, especially as the flawless and elegant school were almost all rather flat and failed to get us anywhere. I was more drawn towards those whose general effect was pointed and who had a feeling for their medium. On this estimate, for example, R. J. P. Hewison scores a good near-miss ; I enjoyed his camp meal, eaten " en raisonnant des lois des boy-scouts," and almost more the brilliant though monstrous syntax of " j'ai été friponné, lié, recité," whether intentional or not.

Inevitably the scouts were more shabbily treated than the poets, the Jamboree providing an obviously fertile terrain. According to " G.U." Candide found there some enterprising young men who should go far : " Les boy-scouts acceptèrent de bonne grâce les billets de banque d'Eldorado et changèrent même en monnaie du pays tout ce que Candide avait sur lui." Candide ends in prison " pour trafic illégal de devises étrangères." The scouts, of course, got away with it. " G.U." does not—quite.

A first prize of four guineas goes to H. J. R. for a shameful idea admirably worked out, and for an almost unbearably authentic Cunégonde. " Mespil " gets the remaining two guineas, in spite of " responsable de toutes les dépenses." I hope he will forgive me for printing his " belles filles " as plain " filles " ; somehow the faint suggestion of daughters-in-law spoilt the focus.

Some superb Candide came, not in the competition but casually, during the preliminaries of setting, from an Olympian pen in Great Turnstile. " . . . Pour dérouté qu'il fut par ces propositions nonconformistes, Candide n'admira pas moins la sagesse du Créateur qui voulut que tous les goûts soient dans la Nature, et le sentiment de son innocence le consola des peines que la vie cellulaire lui infligea. . . ."

FIRST PRIZE

CE QUI ADVINT DE CANDIDE ET DE CUNÉGONDE À BADAJOZ

L'évêque de Badajoz avait une très jolie parente laquelle avait reçu tout recemment un quatrain anonyme et Monseigneur, qui écumait la jalousie, en faisait rechercher partout l'auteur.

Candide composait des vers à Mlle. Cunégonde dans la salle commune de l'auberge lorsqu'il fut abordé par un jeune garçon vêtu d'une courte culotte brune et une chemise de la même couleur, qui lui demanda très poliment s'il était poète.

" Un peu " répondit-il modestement.

" En ce cas " dit l'autre " je vous conseille de vous éloigner au plus vite de Badajoz et de la fureur de l'Evêque."

" Il n'aime pas la poésie ? " fit Candide étonné.

" Il aime beaucoup sa parente " fut la réponse.

Bienqu'il ne comprît rien à ce radotage Candide se résolut à partir et demanda à son compagnon d'attendre le reveil de Cunégonde et de la prier de le rejoindre sur la route de Lisbon. L'autre consentit avec empressement, en expliquant qu'il appartenait à une Société de jeunes gens qui s'efforcaient de rendre tous les jours un service quelconque à leurs prochains.

En retrouvant sa maîtresse à l'endroit convenu Candide lui fit l'éloge de cet enfant serviable qui faisait chaque jour une bonne action.

" Il en a fait plusieurs aujourd'hui " dit en rougissant Cunégonde " et il est beaucoup moins enfant que vous ne pensez. Je vois bien maintenant que les Bulgares ne sont que des sauvages." H. J. R.

The Index to Vol. XXXIII is now ready. This contains, as a SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT, the articles which appeared in the National Press while issues of the *New Statesman* for Feb. 22nd and March 1st, 1947, were suspended owing to the Fuel Crisis.
Price 1/- post free from :
The Publisher, New Statesman and Nation,
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SECOND PRIZE

. . . Il est évident, dit Pangloss, que gouverné par la jeunesse le monde verrait une renaissance de la justice et de la paix, car la jeunesse généreuse aime la vertu. Sa physionomie annonce la bonté de son âme. Et le maximum de vérité et de franchise se trouvera là où les jeunes gens seront le plus nombreux. Ainsi, vous feriez bien en vous faisant scout.

Et Candide devint scout.

Il était heureux d'avoir dans sa tente deux jeunes poètes. Ceux-ci disputèrent beaucoup de leur art et dirent à Candide que tous les poètes précédents étaient ou des rimeurs fort plats ou des raisonneurs pédants. Pour eux, ils voulaient chanter, sans rime ni raison, la saveur âpre de la vie.

Le même soir ils emmenèrent Candide savourer la vie dans une belle maison des environs où ils chantèrent, dansèrent, burent trop de vin, et couchèrent avec les filles de la châtelaine.

Le matin, ses confrères étant disparus, Candide se trouva responsable de toutes les dépenses. Comme il n'avait pas le sou, la châtelaine et ses filles se jetèrent en furies sur le misérable, lui égratignèrent le visage, arrachèrent ses cheveux, et le lancèrent pour mort par la fenêtre . . . MESPIL

Chemin faisant, Candide rencontra un abbé qui conduisait vingt jeunes gens portant chacun une culotte, un lissac et un bâton long de six pieds anglais. Les salutations faites—

" Nous sommes *boy-scouts*," expliqua l'abbé, " Venez bivouaquer sur une métairie voisine."

Sous un berceau d'arbres ils firent assez bonne chère, en raisonnant des lois des *boy-scouts*.

" Maintenant," dit Candide, " je vois comment tout est pour le mieux."

Il se reveilla tout nu. Des *boy-scouts* il ne restait que certaines cordes qui le reliaient à terre. Vers midi un poète passa.

" Enfin," fit-il, " un auditeur."

Et il se met à réciter ses œuvres pendant quelques heures. Candide, mouvant d'ennui, s'endort.

" Hé, le coquin," s'écria le poète. " Il faut que tu fasses attention."

Il s'empara d'une baguette qu'avait laissée un *boy-scout*.

" Maître," dit Candide, " que j'appelle à votre sens du convenable. S'il me faut être fouetté, au moins qu'il soit sur le derrière."

" C'est raisonnable," fit l'autre, relâchant les ficelles pour qu'il tournât Candide face à terre.

" Alois," se dit Candide, une fois échappé, " j'ai été friponné, lié, récité. J'ai failli être fessé par un versificateur mal apprécié. Certes, Pangloss dirait que je dois prendre garde aux faux *boy-scouts* et me méfier des poètes inconnus." R. J. P. HEWISON

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